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EVANGELICALISM

EVANGELICALISM

BY MEMBERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF
EVANGELICAL CHURCHMEN

EDITED BY

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1925 PREFACE

THE present age is peculiarly one of those epochs in human history in which men's minds are in a state of unsettlement. It is just one hundred years ago since man was enabled to revolutionise his methods of transport by the adoption of steam. And the intervening century has seen man's material progress developing at an ever-accelerating rate. Floods of new information have been, and are still being, poured out upon the always thirsty ground of the human mind. Our conceptions of many things have had to be radically revised. It is not, therefore, at all surprising that the sheer mental exhilaration of the times should produce in many minds the notion that we live in a new world, and that all our previous ideas were false.

Then upon all this seething intellectual unrest came the blast of the war. Not merely intellectual ideas, but moral values also, were thrown into the melting-pot for many people. Nor has the resultant economic and political distress helped to settle men's minds.

And it is precisely the things that matter most that seem to be most in question. And more than any other science, theology, which must perforce be the queen and crown of all, including all others within its purview, has seemed to be affected. The present time is therefore peculiarly an age of

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theological unsettlement. The reactions are violent and disturbed in all the Churches. In the Church of England it has emerged in the two regular historical forms. On the one hand there is an aggressive sacerdotalism, and on the other a more modest but growing movement, which for want of a better word is termed "modernism." The influences arising from these movements may be gauged with considerable accuracy by the proposals which are now being earnestly debated for the revision of the Prayer Book.

Then again within the ranks of those who profess and call themselves Evangelicals there are tendencies corresponding to the movements outside. These tendencies are usually termed by those concerned "Central Churchmanship" and "Liberalism" respectively.

The time, therefore, has appeared not inopportune for the issue of a statement by those who are not attracted by either of the prevailing tendencies of to-day. It was with this idea in mind that the Fellowship of Evangelical Churchmen conceived the idea of such a volume of essays as the one now offered to the public. The essays are the work of a group of friends whose personal friendship is enhanced by the happy realisation of the fact that they are united in the close bonds of a common conception of their Lord's teaching and purpose, as well as a common loyalty to Him. This does not, of course, mean that each is responsible for what the others have written either here or elsewhere. As a matter of fact, these present chapters have been mostly written without any opportunity

for mutual consultation, and the responsibility of each writer is to be understood as strictly limited to his own contribution. But the putting forth of this volume does mean that they have been led into a unity of the Spirit which covers all the great fundamentals and which is exceedingly precious to them all.

The enterprise has been sorely hindered. Our honoured leader, Dean Wace, had most kindly undertaken the general editorship of the book; but after one talk together on the subject came his death, which has left the whole Church on earth the poorer. Another man greatly beloved, who had promised his help, was Dr Griffith Thomas; but he also "was not, for God took him." He was to have been responsible for some important contributions, but his sudden and unexpected death took place before he had set pen to paper. It will be understood therefore under what difficulties the volume has progressed, and under what a solemn sense of personal loss to us who remain. Our problems have been many; what to include and what to omit; what specially needed to be said and how best to say it; while the opportunities for personal consultation have been few.

Now we send our statement forth with the prayer that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, will Himself deign to use it to the guidance of some who are in perplexity, and the stabilising of the faith of His people in days of uncertainty.

J. RUSSELL HOWDEN.

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I

THE INCARNATION

REV. I. SIVITER, M.A.

“Mysteries of faith can never be secluded from the activities of reason ; for the mind must strive to discover its own unity even in its supreme object.”—MACKINTOSH.

A CLEAR understanding of the past is essential if we are to have a correct estimate of the present and a clear conception of the future. The common danger to-day is to look upon past events as if they were haphazard or accidental. The study of history merely from the human point of view yields a result which is chaotic, uncertain and unsatisfactory. Hence false conceptions arise, such as that “God is always on the side of great battalions,” and that “history appears to be essentially immoral.” The correction is found in studying history from the Divine standpoint. This will save us from the idea that in the history of the race God has been making experiments with men, and that when one plan failed He adopted another. A closer study of history reveals a gradual progression running through the ages like a line of light. Even H. G. Wells, in his introduction to *The Outlines of History*, quotes Ratzel’s striking words : “A philosophy of the history of the human race, worthy of its name, must begin with the heavens and descend to the earth, must be charged with the conviction that all existence

is one—a single conception sustained from the beginning to end upon one identical law.” We shall attempt to show (alas ! all too briefly, owing to lack of space) that the one continuous purpose running through the past ages is the one announcement of the advancing steps of “ Someone ” who should verify or disprove Himself in the degree in which He answered to the spiritual nature and wants of man. A great story demands a long prologue—hence the literature of fifteen centuries had been enlisted in the service of this Central Figure of History, and the annals and hopes of an entire people, to say nothing of the yearning and guesses of the world, had been moulded into one long anticipation of this “ Coming One.”¹ Or, to put it in other words, great events require great preparations, and it has been the faith of the Christian Church for centuries that each successive peal of “ the silver bell of history ” announced the advancing steps of “ God ” Who was to be “ manifest in the flesh.” Let us then turn to the hoary past and examine these “ bits of light ” which heralded the approaching daybreak.

When the Apostle tells the Galatians that “ when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son,” he was writing with historical accuracy. He came “ in due time,” at the culminating moment. “ In due time,” which was God’s own time. But while fully recognising this we are equally bound to admit that God employed natural means for the furtherance of His purposes. We can only briefly indicate the way God prepared

¹ See Liddon’s *Divinity of Christ*.

the world for the Incarnation. It was necessary that a general desire should arise among men to acknowledge the existence of One supreme God. "The work of proclaiming the unity of God fell almost entirely to the share of Israel, though the trend of pagan thought was already in the direction of Monotheism."¹ This "trend" was doubtless due to the revelation of the absolute unity of God which had been vouchsafed to God's chosen people, and to their ceaseless proclamation that He was the God Whom alone an Israelite might lawfully worship; and as the only God of all the world, Whom all the people would eventually be brought to acknowledge. The Jews were becoming more and more ripe for the advent of someone, for their helplessness had taught them their only hope was from above. They were never more anxious for a Messiah than during the dark period just before the date assigned to the Bethlehem story.

What of the other nations? Philosophy had lost its power as a moral force. It was accepted by the few and ridiculed by the many. The only popular philosophy was that of despair. "But pessimism was not confined to philosophy: it affected every aspect of life and thought. Seneca may be regarded as the typical representation of serious pagan thought in the Neronian age, and in Seneca we reach the sad gospel of a universal pessimism. It is a lost world he sees before him, trying fruitless anodynes for its misery, holding out its hands for help from every quarter. This, however, was nothing new. . . . Forty years

¹ Foakes Jackson, *History of Christian Church*, p. 2.

before the birth of Christ, Virgil in his fourth eclogue expressed the prevalent sense of universal need ; it was convinced that only Divine intervention could furnish a Saviour for it.”¹

With the failure of philosophy there came also the decay of ancient religions. A Roman writer confessed that even the children no longer believed in their deities. The naiads had left their fountains and the dryads had left their groves. Jove’s right hand had lost its thunder, and Neptune lay senseless beside his trident. Man’s despair was God’s method of paving the way for the world’s redemption. The heathen world had been prepared for the reception of a universal religion by several important factors :

(a) “ The work of Rome was ‘to unite and organise the world.’ ”² From the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the mouth of the Rhine to the slopes of the Atlas Mountains, the Roman Emperor Augustus was the sole lord, and practically all mankind were citizens of a common state.

(b) When Jesus was born the whole earth was enjoying the majesty of the Roman Pax. The gates of the temple of Janus were open in times of war and closed in times of peace. During six hundred years of Roman history these gates were shut but four times. During one of the periods, and that the most remarkable, Jesus was born. The Prince of Peace came during

¹ Streatfield, *The Incarnation*, p. 25.

² Foakes Jackson, *Early Church History*, p. 14.

the awful hush of the Roman Peace—the hush of a war-wearied world.

- (c) From the Golden Milestone in the Forum there stretched out far and wide the Roman highways, which rendered travelling easy and safe. “Under Rome’s rule men began to move freely from place to place, and the Christian preacher went from town to town in the track of the merchant.”¹ In this sense, the whole earth lay open to the new message of mercy and love.
- (d) The Greek language became the universal language and a magnificent medium for the dissemination of the new truths. Rome conquered Greece; but the Greek language conquered Rome, and this in time became the handmaid of the new Gospel.
- (e) As we have already seen, there was a great preparation in the moral experience of men for the coming of Christ. On every hand there was the deep yearning of an inarticulate need. Socrates sighed aloud for a Teacher from heaven. Pliny prayed for a new Deliverer, great and strong, of whom he had not yet heard or read. Aurelius, sad and agitated, stretched out his hands for Someone beyond. Evidently, then, “the due time” had come, for the world had never before felt its helplessness so keenly, neither had it desired so intensely the coming of a Divine Helper.

¹ Foakes Jackson, *Early Church History*, p. 14.

THE FACT

The doctrine of the Incarnation is that God and man have been united in an historic Person as the essential condition for effecting the salvation of the human race. It has been suggested that such an idea is improbable, if not impossible. From the days of Celsus, the greatest of pagan critics, downwards it has been common for opponents of the doctrine to say that the Incarnation would have degraded God. Its profundity staggers them and they cry "impossible." But man's *impossible* is GOD'S *possible* and we must not measure Him by human standards.

Human profundities are Divine simplicities. Mackintosh points out that—

"It has often been suggested that Incarnation in the case of Christ is rendered improbable by the fact that allied beliefs occur in various ethnic religions. The conviction that Deity may take embodied form in this or that great man was widely spread, for example, in Greece and India. Out of this ineradicable tendency have sprung a multitude of myths resembling the Christian story. And this it is held discredits our doctrine from the first. Jesus was deemed to be Incarnate only because in that age the thought of Incarnation was commonly applied to impressive personalities." ¹

But Dorner in his *Person of Christ* has made an examination of other religions and has shown that they were blind attempts to realise that truth

¹ Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 428.

which the Incarnation supplied. He also proves it to be an impossibility for the Christian doctrine to have been borrowed from human sources, as the critical and mythical interpreters would assume. He shows that "the Christian doctrine cannot have been derived from the Oriental, which humanised God ; nor from the Greek, which deified man ; nor from the Hebrew in its Palestinian form, which degraded the idea of the Incarnate God into a temporal Messiah ; nor in its Alexandrian form, which never reached in its theory of the Λόγος (Logos) the idea of the distinction of Person of the Son from the Father."¹ The mythical Christs are absurdities, suggesting a half-educated flippancy, blasphemy frequently wedded to beastliness.² Nevertheless these creatures of mythology, with all these absurdities, were the plaintive but unconscious cry for the Incarnation. These myths revealed a general desire for an embodied ideal, because abstract theism was no solid basis for trust. As Mackintosh says : " These premonitions were not the cause of the Gospel, but they enabled men to appreciate it when it came." Yet it must be emphasised that there was nothing in man's experience to suggest the Incarnation. The pagan incarnations represent their gods as taking on them human forms only ; they are mere manifestations of the gods. But in the True Incarnation we see " God in a human body, with a human

¹ See *Critical History of Free Thought* (Bampton Lectures), p. 394.

² For further study of this subject see *Mythic Christs and the True* (Dr St Clair Tisdall) and *Jesus Christ, Historical or Mythical* (Dr Thorburn).

soul ; yet there are no absurdities. It is not two beings somehow united, not two persons with two minds, two conflicting existences, wedded in impossible bonds ; but One Being, harmonious, symmetrical, consistent—not God in man, or God and Man, but the God-Man.”¹

“ What we claim for Jesus Christ is that in Him a new type of Being appears, to which new effects, physical and moral, are strictly natural. The Incarnation is, in fact, the one absolutely new thing under the sun. It is the appearance of a new phenomenon from which new supernatural effects may be looked for as a matter of course.”²

It is not enough to say that the Coming of Christ is the transcendent climax of Divine inhabitation. To speak of His Person as representing the absolute immanence of God is inadequate. To conceive of Him as “ the transcendent crown of Evolution ” is to obscure the truth. The late Dr H. Rashdall brings these ideas together in one passage, and says : “ If we believe that every human soul reveals, reproduces, incarnates God to some extent ; if we believe that in the great ethical teachers of mankind, the great religious personalities, God is more fully revealed than in other men . . . then it becomes possible to believe that in One Man the self-revelation of God has been signal, supreme, unique.”

But our reply is that Christ is not merely *an*

¹ Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs*, p. 239.

² Ottley, *Incarnation*, p. 18.

Incarnation of God. HE IS GOD, and is unique not merely in degree but in kind.

THE NECESSITY

The question now arising is: Was the Incarnation necessary?

We have tried to state the Fact, we declare our firm opinion that the Incarnation was *absolutely necessary*. If the "Absolute" of the philosophers was even more inaccessible than the Jehovah of the Jews, a fuller revelation of God to man was absolutely necessary. But the great question is this: *Was such a revelation possible?* With emphasis we give an affirmative reply. Who are we that we should say "can God?" or to disparage His Omnipotence? God *could* favour the human race with a fuller revelation of Himself because His power is as infinite as His love. *Was such a revelation probable?* All we know about God leads us to recognise that He is not a rigid immobile Stoic, but that He is Heart, as well as Will and Force. Celsus sneered at the Christians because they worshipped a crucified God. He could only understand a God Who was impassive and unheeding. Our God is a Living God. Our God is a Personal God, so that it was not only possible, but probable, that He would supplement His earlier teaching by a fuller revelation. "The Eternal Father would have remained for ever unknown but for the Word that 'was in the beginning with God and was God.' " ¹

¹ Dale, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 157.

But now we are met with the important question : *How could the Infinite and Eternal best reveal Himself to humanity?* In the first place, it was necessary that He should reveal Himself through the finite ; but not only through the finite, but also through the familiar. He must stand within the limits of our faculties before we can grasp Him. "It is true that God transcends the Universe and that the distance between Him and our race is infinite ; but it is also true that in the Eternal life of the Godhead there is a Divine 'Person' so near akin to us that it was possible for Him to take our life into His own, to 'become Flesh,' to make His home in the world, to share the happiness and misery of the race."¹

"He took not on Him the nature of angels," for even God in angelic being would have been a God comparatively unrevealed to man. God must reveal Himself to man through a human life. It needed Man to save fallen man, but only God could do it. Hence the Theanthropic Person of the Lord Jesus. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." "Emmanuel ; God with us." God came out of the vast immensities and was "clothed with flesh." In that sinless Divine Human Person we see the best possible revelation of God to man. "Not the Sculptor's statuary : but the Sculptor Himself. Not the Author's volume : but the Author Himself. Not the Word written : but 'the Word made flesh.'"

There can be no nearer approach of mind to mind, and of heart to heart, than through a living

¹ Dale, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 159.

personality ; and God could find no better way of reaching man than by "tabernacling among us."

In Jesus Christ the Transcendent becomes the Immanent, and we are able to grasp Him. Creation is as nothing when compared with the Incarnation. That great event has affected the very life-currents of human history, it has sent forth holy undulations over the whole surface of human society, and it is going to be followed by a grand series of spiritual triumphs which shall result in the final victory of light over darkness, of peace over war, of holiness over sin, and of heaven over hell.

THE MODE OF THE INCARNATION

We have seen that for many centuries God was on His way to man. At last He became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. In other religions we have man seeking God, but in Christianity we have God seeking man.

God Who spoke thunders, and sent forth lightnings on Sinai's heights, came down to speak tender mercy and grace in the Son of His Love. He came in His own time, and that undoubtedly was the best time. He is the great Central Factor of all previous history, and the glorious goal without which creation would be purposeless. As Chrysostom says : "He is the Divine Keystone in the arch of the Universe, on which the whole fabric leans." The God of the promises has become God in the flesh. Thus we have in Him the "Exegete of the Eternal"—the Expositor of

the Infinite Heart—warm, tender, and eternally pulsating with purest love.

We have reminded ourselves that God had prepared the world for the Advent, but it is true to say that *consciously* the world made no preparation for His coming. "There was no room in the inn." But, if the records are to be trusted, and we do trust them, the birth at Bethlehem was accompanied by mighty movements in the spiritual and intellectual realms.¹ There are three worlds of created intelligences, and all were strangely and wonderfully moved as He came. The World of Angels was moved. When the author of the Hebrews' Epistle refers to these events he writes :

"When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. i. 6). Angels gathered around the event, both prior to it and immediately connected with it (Matt. i. 20, 24 ; ii. 19 ; Luke ii. 8).

The World of Men was Moved. "Voices of prophecy long silent were heard again. Great psalms—and none had been composed for long years—broke spontaneously from the hearts of men and women. Finally seekers from afar who knew not the oracles, and were without a Covenant of Jehovah, were led by the shining of a star to the place, and to the attitude of worship."

Of all births, then, this Bethlehem birth was the most unique. It is universally admitted that Jesus

¹ We are indebted to a sermon by Dr Campbell Morgan for this line of thought.

lived a unique life and died a unique death, and (putting it on the lowest ground), to preserve the harmony of parts, we naturally expect a unique birth. A miraculous birth cannot be followed by a commonplace life, neither can a miraculous life like Christ's be preceded by a commonplace birth. The Christian belief is that this unique life was hedged in by miracle. The miraculous resurrection and ascension at the end of His earthly life find their balance in a miraculous conception at the beginning of it. The fact is we can no more separate His birth from His life and death than we can separate luminosity from the sun. The value of one depends upon the other. The full-orbed Christ or nothing. We lay emphasis upon this, for it is common now to say that the question is not of vital importance. Dr Peake says: "I wish . . . to say . . . that I do not regard this question as one which vitally affects the Christian faith. Many Christians very injudiciously, as I believe, speak as if the Divinity of Christ and His sinlessness were vitally bound up with the question of His human origin." ¹ The same thought comes from a less likely quarter. Dr David Smith writes: "It will matter little on the Day of Judgment what theory we held about our Lord's Virgin Birth, His Divinity, or His Resurrection: but it will matter infinitely how much of His grace and charity dwelt in our hearts and shone in our lives." ² Mr Panton, commenting upon this passage, says: "All such thinkers discover, too late, that grace is inseparable

¹ Peake, *Christianity: Its Nature and Truth*, p. 197.

² Quoted by Rev. D. M. Panton in *The Christian*.

from truth, and one dies with the other: that when we have once allowed ourselves to deny the Scriptures, and are deliberately resolved to do so, the main sinew of grace is fused and the fortress of truth crumbles in the soul."

"To deny the Virgin Birth," says Bishop Westcott, "is to make the Lord a man, one man in the race, and not the new man, the Son of Man, in whom the race is gathered up."

It seems, then, inevitable that the entrance of such a Person into the world should be supernatural, and the efforts of nineteen centuries to crush the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, beginning with the Ebionites and the Gnostics and ending with Tom Paine, Voltaire, Strauss, Renan and the Modernists, have left it unimpaired to-day. Nevertheless the attack continues so pertinaciously that a discussion of the doctrinal implications of this article of faith is necessary.

We feel that Christian writers who either deny or minimise the fact of the Virgin Birth have not fully thought out the implications of their position. How did the story arise? Is it a mere invention—a legend carried over, as Dr Cheyne suggests, from the nature-myths and folk-stories of the Babylonians? We have already pointed out that the one class of stories are all more or less obscene, and are not worthy to be compared with the New Testament narratives. "The mythic stories of the pagans all relate (or imply) the visit in corporeal person of some anthropomorphic god to the lady in question, or else the actual *semina vitæ* of the god are thought of as being conveyed to their

destination in some physical, but abnormal and extravagant manner. In the Christian narratives, however, there is not a trace of this. It is the Holy Spirit which 'comes upon' the Virgin—*i.e.* the power of the 'Most High' that overshadows her. It is throughout a wholly immaterial process."¹ The totally different idea underlying the New Testament narratives,² and the entire absence of the "objective carnal element," rules out, once and for all, the suggestion that the New Testament story was borrowed from, or built upon, the pagan myths.

If not then from these legends, how did the story come into being?

It is rooted in our records and congruous with our creeds. It is there: and how did it come there, and why has it remained there, except by being true?

Words uttered in our hearing by the late Dean of Canterbury come back with tremendous force:

"As you read that narrative in St Luke's Gospel it sheds a glory all around our Saviour's life and the Christian religion. Then comes one of these Modernists and drags it down to the level of an ordinary birth, with no glory about it at all. The halo of that magnificent glory that is shed about it in St Matthew and St Luke is gone, and you are asked to consider that Our Lord, the Son of Mary and the Son of Joseph, came into the

¹ See *Jesus the Christ: Historical or Mythical* (Thorburn), pp. 193-194.

² We are not concerned here about the inspiration of the New Testament; we are treating the narrative as historical.

world like one of us. Is it not a distressing and a pitiable descent, quite apart from any more doctrinal differences that there must be ? . . .

“Is St Luke to be trusted? If he is, there is an end to any question of the fact of the Virgin Birth: and if he is not to be trusted there, where is he to be trusted? In Canon Glazebrook’s book it is said that the evidence for the Virgin Birth is not sufficient. What evidence do they want? Here is a person whom you know perfectly well, St Luke, whose historical personality and trustworthiness are thoroughly well established, the friend of St Paul, who comes and tells you this plain, matter-of-fact, this solemn, glorious story. Are you going to believe him or not? That is really the whole issue.”¹

The denial of the Virgin Birth involves us in perplexities far greater than any it solves. It is, to say the least, mischievous and dangerous even to suggest “the Virgin Birth does not matter.” We cannot forget that rejection of the Virgin Birth seldom, if ever, goes by itself.

As Dr Orr says: “Among those who reject the Virgin Birth of Our Lord few will be found—I do not know any—who take in other respects an adequate view of the Person and work of the Saviour.” With this agrees the testimony of the late Professor A. B. Bruce, who affirmed that “with denial of the Virgin Birth is apt to go denial of the Virgin Life.”

¹ Dean Wace in *Evangelicalism: Answer to Anglo-Catholicism and Modernism*, p. 8.

Here are examples : Wellhausen abandoned all Christian worship ; S. Davidson ended bereft of every Christian conviction ; Loisy's sun set in infidelity ; Cheyne died a Bahaist.

This truth is more than necessary ; it is vital and momentous. Earnest heed must be paid to the facts. In the narrative by St Luke we read that before Mary was married to Joseph, while living at Nazareth, she was visited by the angel Gabriel, who announced that the Holy Ghost should come upon her (St Luke i. 35).

When it became known that Mary was " with child " Joseph was filled with alarm. But " being a just man and unwilling to disgrace her, he resolved to divorce her secretly " (Matt. i. 19, Moffatt's trans.). But after he had planned this the truth was revealed to him. What does all this mean ? We hesitate to write it, yet it must be penned in order to show what serious and far-reaching results accrue from a denial of the Virgin Birth. " If the birth was not of the Holy Ghost, since it was not of Joseph, himself being witness, Jesus was base-born : there is but one step between belief and blasphemy." ¹

Have those who deny or minimise the Virgin Birth given sufficient thought to another fact—viz. " *If Jesus was Joseph's Son, He was not the Messiah* " ? If Jesus had been the Son of Joseph He would have no right to the throne of David, for Jechoniah is in the genealogy, and none of his seed can ever sit on the throne of David (cp. Jer. xxii. 30 ; Matt. i. 11). But Messiah had to be

¹ Panton, *The Virgin Birth*, a pamphlet.

the legal heir of Joseph. How is the difficulty solved? The late Rev. John Wilkinson puts two or three things together thus: "Joseph had a right to David's throne as being in the royal line, but even he could not occupy the throne which was barred against him by Jechoniah. And then Jesus was not and could not be Joseph's son. The Messiah must be the child of a Virgin, and of David's seed. Jesus was the son of a Virgin of David's seed, but not in royal line from Solomon. Now how is the difficulty to be solved? Simply by a marriage between Joseph and the Virgin Mother of the Messiah.¹ Thus Jesus had a right to the throne through Joseph, and is eligible to sit on that throne as David's son through Mary. By that marriage Jesus escapes the two barriers in the genealogy of Matthew, and walks over the one barrier in the genealogy of Luke. The two genealogies were necessary. It was necessary that both Joseph and Mary should be of David's seed. The marriage between Joseph and Mary was also necessary."²

From this we see that the interests of prophecy and the right to David's throne have been most carefully protected by the Divine Hand. Indeed

¹ "Betrothal under the Law involved a legal status of wedlock (Deut xxii. 23, 24): so *after* the espousal, and *before* the marriage, took place the conception by the Holy Ghost. So also God's angel said: 'Joseph, *thou son of David*, fear not to take unto thee *Mary thy wife*' (Matt. i. 20): and Gabriel could say with the law on his side, 'the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*' (Luke i. 32). For Jesus was the legal Heir of the Head of the eldest branch of the Royal House" (Panton, *Virgin Birth*).

² *Israel my Glory*, p. 207.

we may say that the genealogies of St Matthew and St Luke harmonise the teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures respecting the Messiah as Son of David and the Son of God. All the apparently discordant voices of prophecy find their harmony in the Virgin Birth. Without this Divine Key in our hands prophecy is an ill-woven tissue of variegated threads.

Is the Virgin Birth any aid to the explanation of the sinlessness of Christ's nature? It is stated in many quarters that the doctrine does not provide us with a strong guarantee for the sinlessness of Jesus or help us to explain it. Dr Peake says: "I have never been able to understand why the transmission of a sinful human nature could not have come just as well through one parent as through two. . . . Mary constituted no exception to the universal sinfulness of the human race. Hence we cannot explain the sinlessness of Jesus by supernatural birth."¹

In reply to this objection Dr Orr turns the matter round and asks: "Does not perfect sinlessness, on the other hand, imply a miracle in the birth?"² To deny the physical miracle of the birth is but the first step to the denial of the moral miracle of the life. The experience of Dr Orr is that there is hardly one of those who deny the physical miracle but hedges when he is brought face to face with the moral miracle.

The truth has been clearly put by Dr Ottley, who says: "It was necessary that He who came

¹ Peake, *Christianity: Its Nature and Truth*, p. 178.

² Orr, *The Virgin Birth*, p. 189.

into saving contact with human nature should be none lower than *the Holy One of God*. It is a reasonable conclusion that the entail of transmitted sin should be cut off by the supernatural birth: for sin belonged to man by descent: it was not an original defect of human nature, but an acquired taint. The flesh of the Redeemer was sinless, though He came into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.”¹

Another fact to be observed is that the birth of Jesus differed from ordinary births. When we were born into the world there were creations of new personalities. But when Christ was born it was a Divine Person—already existing—entering on this new mode of existence. Miracle alone could affect such a wonder, and paternal generation in such a case is superfluous. When Christ was born into the world “He became what He was not before, but He continued to be what He was.” He came down from above, leaving the glory He had enjoyed with the Father before the world began.

What bearing has all this on our salvation; wherein lay the supreme reason of the Virgin Birth? It was to provide an essential basis of atonement. The perfect Body² which was prepared for Christ by the Holy Ghost is the cornerstone of reconciliation.

“It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he

¹ Ottley, *Incarnation*, p. 613.

² The Holy Spirit is a Person, but He has not a body. Personality is not to be confounded with corporeity.

cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but A BODY didst thou prepare for me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 7).

By the offering of His Body as the sole burnt offering He has accomplished all the objective work of our redemption; so much so that all who stand in Him before God are accepted as saints.

"We are sanctified through the offering of THE BODY of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10).

The Body, then, was prepared, not so much for the birth as for the bruising (Gen. iii. 15).¹

Belief in the Virgin Birth, then, is of the highest value for the right apprehension of Christ's atoning work on Calvary.

We have been handling a theme which staggers the human intellect. Complete explanation is impossible. "You cannot translate the Alps into a series of propositions," says Dr Dale, "and there is no formula for the purple and golden pomp of a sunset, or for the majesty of a thunder-storm." We are not to be impatient of mystery. Our God has given to us the light of His Holy Word. We are to walk in it and rejoice in it. Let us thankfully accept it, and reverently submit to what our minds cannot comprehend, but which faith gladly apprehends. We shall honour the light by obeying it, and in so doing honour God.

¹ See D. M. Panton's *Virgin Birth*.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

We said at the beginning that one great purpose ran through the ages. We shall naturally expect, then, an historical manifestation ; and what do we find ? A child is born in Bethlehem and brought up at Nazareth, consecrated by baptism in the Jordan, collects about Him a company of chosen followers, lives in intercourse with men, teaches ; and His teaching is indispensable to the effect to be produced. It is in these facts, and the fact of His own Person and Character, that the Gospel centres. They are the material, the vehicle, of revelation. Jesus Himself wrote nothing, and it is acknowledged that nothing respecting Him had been put into writing at the date of His ascension. Yet the Christian faith was in being ; the Gospel was preached, the testimony of the Apostles was spread abroad ; numerous converts were made ; but not less than a score of years may have passed before those first essays at recording what the disciples knew respecting His life were composed. When we turn to these primitive documents of Christianity what do we find ; how did this Person appear to His contemporaries ? He was no stranger to them. They knew His home ; His parentage ; His education. For thirty years He had worked as a carpenter in their midst. This Carpenter had taken to preaching, and on the occasion of His first visit as a Preacher to His old home at Nazareth His hearers were staggered, and, if the records are to be trusted, we are in-

formed that they had come across a phenomenon which they could not explain. They were baffled. They were at their wits' end, and asked in astonishment: "Whence hath this Man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's Son?" His parentage could not account for this marvel. He was born of the lowliest. He had no social prestige.

It is claimed by scientists that a man's career can be accounted for by the facts of his family history. But in this case the law of heredity does not seem to work. This, at least, is not the key to unlock the mystery of this Man of Nazareth.

What of His education? He had been to no leading schools. "How knoweth this Man letters having never learned?" This was the puzzle of those who knew Him. "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching." Such words as "the people marvelled," "wondered," "were astonished," run through the Gospels almost like a refrain. They all go to show what a mighty impact the teaching of Jesus had made upon the minds of men. He suggested questions which none could answer.

His contemporaries faced Him and asked in bewilderment: "Whence art thou?" "Who giveth Thee this authority?" What was the meaning of His "I say unto you"?

His hearers tried to prove that His dictum was wrong, but "*the world*" knows He was right. From the human standpoint He was to everybody in Palestine an enigma and a puzzle.

Dr J. D. Jones of Bournemouth in a striking

sermon on this subject says: "Everyone else can be explained and accounted for, but Christ remains the mystery and marvel of the world. Many great men have appeared in the course of the world's history.

"There have been great thinkers, like Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle, and Kant, and Hegel. There have been illustrious poets, like Homer and Æschylus and Virgil, and Dante, and Shakespeare and Milton. There have been marvellously gifted artists, like Phidias and Apelles, Michael Angelo and Raphael. There have been great statesmen and rulers and conquerors, like Pericles and Alexander, and Cæsar and Cromwell, and Napoleon. These men were great men. They were supremely gifted men. They tower above the ordinary level of humanity as some great Alpine height, like the Jungfrau does over the valley that nestles at its feet."

And yet while we admire the greatness of these men we are not puzzled or bewildered by it. These were great men, but still they were only men after all. They can be explained—they can be accounted for.

The character of Christ, the intellect of Christ and, what is more, the deepest part of His Personality, His great loving heart, are all unique, and along ordinary lines cannot be accounted for.

The marvel is all the greater if we consider the labour of Jesus in the education of twelve of His followers. He found them rough and raw material, and yet in His hands they underwent a transmutation that is without parallel in the annals of

mankind. They came to Him rude and illiterate, they went from Him spiritual heroes, equipped with an all-conquering might for the conquest of the moral apathy, the deep depravity, the doubt and despair of an exhausted and decaying world. Jesus the obscure, the untaught, unacquainted even by rumour with the schools of Greece or the great philosophies of the world, drew around him a band of men more obscure and unlettered than Himself, and in a brief year or two sent them forth the Apostles of a faith that should subdue the world.

It was something else than intellectual or literary power which made the barbarisms of fishermen triumph over the syllogisms of Athens. That "something" has to be accounted for. The victory was in the weapon, not in the hands that wielded it. But this is not all. Among the followers of the lowly Nazarene we have a phenomenon which stands alone. The thirteenth Apostle was a Cilician Jew, born at Tarsus; and Tarsus was "no mean city," but was one of the most celebrated seats of Grecian learning. Strabo, the geographer, preferred it as an academy to Athens, to Alexandria and, indeed, to every other in the world. Into this purely Greek atmosphere Saul, a purely descended Jew, was born. In him was united the three great streams of civilisation: by birth and education a Jew; by early training and culture a Greek; in political privilege a Roman. This man gave his life for the realisation of one idea. All that he did is the outcome of all that he was. But what is that which made him what he was?

He himself tells us that it was his miraculous conversion. He had been met by Jesus, Whom he persecuted. This being the case, what are we to say of Christ, the One Who converted him ?

Truly this Christ Who can transform the illiterate and revolutionise the learned must be accounted for.

It has been said that He stands as " the Sphinx of History," and so He does if we attempt to explain Him in a mere humanitarian way.

If Christ appeared to the Nazarenes as an enigma, a wonderful phenomenon, He has been no less than that to men and women down the ages of the Christian era, and He stands confronting our own age with the pertinent question : " Whom do men say that I am ? " The question challenges us and it must be answered. Men have tried to explain Him in terms of logic. Mozley in his *Theory of Development* has given us an example. Referring to the ancient Christological controversies he says :

" Each sect appealed triumphantly to the logical irresistibleness of its development. . . . Be logical said the Arian : Jesus Christ is the Son of God : a Son cannot be coeval with his Father. Be logical said the Apollinarian : Jesus was not two persons : He was not therefore perfect God and perfect man too. Be logical said the Nestorian : Jesus was Man and was God ; He was therefore two persons. Be logical, said the Eutychian : Jesus was only one person : He could therefore only have one nature. . . . To the intellectual imagination of

the heresiarchs of the early ages the doctrine of Our Lord's nature took boldly some one line continuously and set forward some one idea."

Obviously this "unaccountable Man" cannot be accounted for in terms of logic. This is admitted by those who have attempted to restate the problem in terms of modern thought.

"In fact any attempt to state in terms of ordinary language the whole meaning of the Divinity of Christ must be inadequate. For, in the first place, we know that logic has never yet solved the difficulty of stating the relation between Universal and Particular, and here (as in the case of a perfect work of art) we have a Particular (Jesus of Nazareth) which is a perfect instance of its own Universal (the Deity)." ¹

In 1857 Archbishop Temple wrote :

"Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mould—*i.e.* based on logic. We are in need of, and we are being gradually forced into, a theology based on psychology."

What the logician failed to do the psychologist hopes to accomplish.

Hence in our own day it is affirmed that—

"The rapid advance of the science of psychology has helped to force the (Christological) problem to the front, and has made many feel that the definition of Christ's Person framed in A.D. 451 by the Council of Chalcedon requires revision." ²

¹ Dr Temple in *Foundations*, p. 252.

² Canon Storr in *Liberal Evangelicalism*, p. 103.

Psychology claims to do much, but it gives no real account of what personality really involves and fundamentally is. Is it reasonable to demand a revision of the orthodox explanation of Christ's Person because of a "science" which, to say the least, has not arrived at finality?

The fact is that in the Person of the Son of God there is something strange and mysterious, *and no psychology can explain Him*. But to hear some speak it would seem as if the time had come when the Christ in Whom Christians have hitherto believed must now be interpreted by a system of laws concerning which man himself knows practically nothing.

Another modern effort to feel a way "towards an adequate metaphysics of Christ's Person" is based on phrases which are calculated to obscure rather than throw light upon the subject. To say that we must change our views of the Person of Christ because "we to-day do not think in terms of substance philosophy" is to put forth a theory which the theorists themselves cannot interpret—*e.g.* "Will," says Dr Temple, "is the only substance there is in man. What, then," he asks, "is the relation of the will—that is, the entire active Personality of Christ to the Father?" The following is his reply. "It is clear that no final answer can be given *until philosophy has provided us with a final account of Personality both human and divine.*"¹ But the same writer suggests that we make some real advance by considering that "in Jesus of Nazareth we touch the Divine

¹ *Foundations*, p. 9.

Humanity which was always in the Godhead. The Everlasting Son of the Father, the *Humanity of God which is eternally obedient to the Divinity of God—if the expression be allowed*—took flesh in the fulness of time, that seeing Him we might learn to love God.”

Dr Temple’s attempted explanation, admittedly, falls into “verbal contradictions” and is “no adequate formulation” or answer to the question: “Whom say ye that I am?”¹ One thing it clearly does: it affirms, as “Liberal Evangelicalism” does, “that the pre-existence of Christ” does not mean “that He pre-existed as a *separate* Personality and Consciousness.”

With all respect to Dr Temple, we are bound to say that his “restatement” is not far removed from the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, who appears to have taught—

- (1) That the Scriptures speak of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
- (2) That the Word or Wisdom in God is not substance or a person.
- (3) That Christ first began to exist as a separate personality when He was born of Mary.
- (4) That by this Word or Wisdom of God Christ was at once God and Son of God.

Paul of Samosata so concealed his real opinions under ambiguous forms of speech that several ecclesiastical councils were unable to point out his errors. At last, in A.D. 269, he was divested of his episcopal office.

We are sorry to weary our readers with these

¹ See *Foundations*, p. 249.

details, but it is imperative in an age, proud of its superior elevation on the heights of philosophy and psychology, to point out that much that goes for modern and advanced thought is simply a new phase of an old controversy, and does not assist us to account for the Jesus of the Gospels.

The modern "explanation" is in reality a demand that certainties of Divine Revelation should go down before the uncertainties of human thought; that the fact of the Scripture should give way to scientific conjecture, and that the words of St John should yield precedence to the statements of German criticism.

We have glanced at the various attempts to explain the Person of Christ, but none of them meets the demand of reason and the heart. There is but one way, and this way is confirmed by the testimony of His own immediate followers, by the primitive documents of Christianity, the New Testament, and by the verdict of the Church throughout the centuries, that in the Man Christ Jesus we have the only begotten Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God.

That explains everything.

Taken separately the Scriptures respecting Him seem contradictory, but looked at in the light of that dual nature that appeared in Him there is immediate and perfect reconciliation. The great paradoxes of prophecy were harmonised in the greater paradox of the life. The writers of the New Testament find in Him the union of opposite extremes, the harmonious combination of irreconcilable antagonisms. A poor young man, asleep

at the bottom of a boat ; He wakes, He speaks, and the storm and seas obey Him. The winds are hushed, the waves subside, and the terror of the tempest gives place to the still serenity of "a great calm." He is emphatically "the Life," and yet He dies. In Pilate's judgment hall He submitted to the scornful derision of a mock coronation ; and yet, "exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on High," His name is proclaimed King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The hands that once were nailed to the Cross of shame are the hands that now in heavenly glory sway the sceptre of the worlds. The fact is indubitable. But the cause of the fact—what is that ? Viewed together—as combined in the actual life—the fact, as we said, is phenomenal. This phenomenon must be accounted for. The fact is indisputable ; but if we accept the Scriptural identification of the Jehovah of the Old Testament with the Jesus of the New the phenomenon is fully accounted for. If we do not accept the Scriptural identification the phenomenon is absolutely unaccountable ; and the problem comes back on our hands : "What manner of man is this ?"

Now suppose that some sincere inquirer with unbiased mind should have recourse to the New Testament Scriptures in quest of plain and positive declarations on this subject, what would he find there ? Among other things he would find :

1. *That the attributes peculiar to Deity are ascribed to Christ.* "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made " (St John i. 1, 3). Here is the precise truth for which we contend. It may appear remarkable that the Evangelist should use a term so important, the explanation of which he pauses not a moment to give. But it is not difficult to assign a reason for this. The term LOGOS or WORD was commonly understood amongst the Jewish Rabbis of that time, and afterwards, of the manifested God. The phrase, " THE WORD OF THE LORD," was employed with a personal reference, and was intended to designate an intelligent agent, invested with personal attributes. Instead, therefore, of being indebted to Plato and Philo for his doctrines, St John uses this term LOGOS to distinguish things that differ ; to separate the specious from the true ; to refute the Gnosticism, equally false and mischievous, which was then so widely prevalent ; and to identify the Christ of the New Testament with the Messiah of the Old. The slightest examination of the first verses of St John's Gospel must convince a mind sincerely in search of truth and yielding to its conviction that the operations ascribed to the "WORD" cannot be predicated of a quality, an attribute or an action. They find their solution as they are applied to a REAL and PERSONAL subsistence—*e.g.*

"In the beginning was the Word." Here the Eternity of Christ is emphatically declared. In the beginning was the essential WORD existing, not in the purpose and decree of God, "nor as the humanity of God eternally obedient to the Divinity

of God,"¹ but as A DISTINCT AND DIVINE PERSON, even the eternal Son.

"The Word was with God."

With God essentially. With Him from all eternity with a separate personality and consciousness. As much with God *then* as He is with Him *now* as the exalted Son. The enthroned and glorified Lord (see John xvii. 5).

"And the Word was God."

Not a created and delegated God, both of these senses being equally absurd and contradictory. "The Word was God," truly, essentially, absolutely, and in the highest sense Jehovah; "God over all blessed for evermore."

By these Scriptures alone the pre-incarnate being of the Person of Christ is placed beyond doubt. But much, very much more, could be added. In St John viii. two charges are brought by the Jews against Christ. One is that of self-exaltation, and the other an assumption of superiority to Abraham their father. To the second charge Christ replied that Abraham had acknowledged His Divine superiority; he saw His day and was glad (ver. 56).

The Jews, eager to impeach His veracity, exclaimed: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" (ver. 57). This question brought the matter to an issue. At their bar He was standing as a witness either for or against Himself. His pre-existence had been arraigned, His Godhead questioned; both of which it was necessary for Him either to deny or affirm. Not a

¹ Dr Temple in *Foundations*, p. 25.

moment does He hesitate: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was"—was born, began to be—"I AM," not I was. The Jews regarded His words as a solemn declaration of His eternity and Godhead. "I AM." The name signifies unchangeable essence and everlasting duration. It is the Name the Jews for centuries had not dared to utter; they had stood reverently before it and adored. And now the lowly Nazarene solemnly claims it. It not only makes Christ's non-existence at any time impossible and unthinkable, but it lifts us into the realm where past and future do not exist.¹ In the twilight of creation's dawning He is "I am," a present Personality brooding over and ordering the goings of the Will of God by manifestation and by speech. It was because Christ made that supreme claim, which the Jews understood as blasphemy, that they took up stones to cast at Him. In the presence of that claim what shall we say? That Jesus was very God. That He had a separate Personality and Consciousness before Bethlehem. If not, what then? One of two things. He was either insane or utterly devoid of truth, and therefore a blasphemer. There is no middle course between these views. But twenty centuries of moral uplift and spiritual vision and the transformation of unfit souls into saints of God do not result from insanity or lying.

We are driven back to the conclusion that while He was very man as we are men, by an infinite mystery that cannot be explained, and we will

¹ See Panton, *Godhead of Jesus*, p. 10. (Thynne & Jarvis, 6d.)

not be foolish enough to try to explain it, He was also God, speaking thus in the terms of humanity what He had so often spoken face to face with men before the Incarnation.

This is an answer to the question : “ Did Christ Himself claim Deity ? ”

If it be objected that we have been appealing to a document, the authenticity of which is questioned, we reply that after a close and unprejudiced inquiry we find it a large tax upon our credulity when we are invited to believe that John the Apostle did not write the fourth Gospel. The early historic testimonies cannot be brushed aside with impunity. Neither can the evidence afforded by the parties without the pale of the Church be ignored ; and we are bound to add that “ Presbyter ” John is apparently a much more notable person in the estimation of the critics of our day than he was in his own time or later. We believe the fourth Gospel to be virtually an autobiography, and there is no reason whatever why the writer of it should betake himself to fables. Such procedure would not be reconcilable with the personal love which the author of the Gospel bore to Jesus. The tender simplicity of many of the narratives stamps them with the seal of truth. To us the hypothesis which identifies the Evangelist John with the author of the fourth Gospel appears entitled to acceptance, being supported by the concurrent testimonies of Christian antiquity.

But this is by no means an end of the evidence. Almighty Power is ascribed to Christ. A comparison of the several passages in the Apocalypse

in which Jesus Christ is expressly designated "The Almighty" should, one would think, be quite sufficient to preclude all controversy (see Rev. xi. 15-17; xv. 2, 3; xix. 6, 12, 13, 15, 16).

Omnipresence is a Divine attribute claimed by Christ (St Matt. xviii. 20). Omniscience is His (Rev. ii. 23). Are these prerogatives of Deity shared—or can they be shared—with one who is not possessed of Deity?

The Works peculiar to Deity are attributed to Christ.

CREATION (St John i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17).

Creation is the act of Jehovah. But is it His act exclusively? Yes, exclusively. "I am Jehovah that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (Isa. xlv. 24). The language here excludes every agent but Jehovah. It is Jehovah that maketh all things. But at the same time it is Jesus Christ that maketh all things—visible, invisible, in heaven, in earth. Jesus Christ, therefore, is Jehovah. The conclusion is irrefragable. For there is no other God but One.

Among other works peculiar to Deity is that of Judgment. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (St John v. 22). What are the qualifications essential to the Being who is to judge the world? Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Independence, all must be His. And these qualities cannot be "delegated," but must, from their very nature, be original and inherent, for they are entirely unsusceptible of transference or communication.

But we are told as against all this that "Modernists" insist on the Unity of Deity, and on the Humanity of Christ. They might, with equal relevance, insist on the rings of Saturn or the moons of Jupiter. For they insist on that which no one denies. The Unity of God and the Humanity of Christ are not in question. These verities are maintained by us no less strenuously than by Liberal Theologians. Their proper business is—not to prove the Unity, but to disprove the Trinity in the Godhead; not to prove the Humanity, but to disprove the Deity of "The Son of Man."

And that they can never do while we have such irrefutable evidence.

Let us endeavour to come face to face with the Person of the Lord Jesus. We cannot exhaust Him in the human Person—Jesus of Nazareth. He is more than a Person that can be seen. In that Person infinite, and eternal, and immeasurable quantities abide. His Divine glory was but veiled, or, as it were, eclipsed, for a little moment by His investiture with the human form. There was no cessation of His Godhead in the stooping to the manhood. The human did not become Divine, nor did the Divine become human. Mysteriously, closely and indissolubly one, they yet were separate and distinct, the peculiar properties of each affected and unchanged by its union with the other.

He Who was, from the eternal ages, in "THE FORM OF GOD . . . emptied himself, taking the FORM OF A SERVANT" (Phil. ii. 6-7. R.V.).

"His Ego, His essential entity in an ante-

mundane existence, predated the Incarnation by a dateless eternity. . . . He lived in the Godhead not as a thought, nor as a principle, but as a Person.”¹

When He became man “He shifted the FORM, but not the Person.”

“There is no warrant” (says Dr Campbell Morgan) “for imagining that He emptied Himself of His essential Deity. The emptying indicates the setting aside of one form of manifestation, in which all the facts of equality with God were evidently revealed, for another form of manifestation, in which the fact of equality with God must for a time be hidden, the necessary submissiveness of the human to the Divine.”²

“He *emptied Himself* not of His plenitude, but of His altitude; not of the Divine prerogatives, but of their exercise. . . . Our Lord divested Himself of the robes of Deity that He might become ‘God’—still God—‘manifest *in the flesh*.’ Christ is not an apex man, a God-ward ascending manhood, a closing evolution, a final flower of the race; He is not an ascent, but a descent—not an ascent of manhood, but a descent of Godhead; and therefore the humility He displayed is of a character that transcends all human thought.”³

In the current controversy it is maintained that the assumption of a human body and a human

¹ Pantton, *The Godhead of Jesus*, p. 19.

² *Crises of the Christ*, p. 55.

³ Pantton, *The Godhead of Jesus*, p. 20.

mind—the KENOSIS—with all their essential and peculiar properties make our Lord liable to infirmities of weakness and errors of ignorance like other men ; consequently it is said that in His endorsement of Old Testament history and prophecy He reflected the current views, traditions and superstitions of His own day. To this we reply that St Paul lays greater emphasis on the PLEROMA—the Divine Filling—than he does on the KENOSIS or self-emptying (see Eph. i. 22 ; iv. 10 ; Col. ii. 3, 9). “ If He emptied Himself, therefore, it was but the signal for such infinite fulness as defies description.” And this fulness includes “ All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ” (Col. ii. 3). How then could He, the All-wise, become ignorant, how could He, the Pleroma of Deity—the Infallible—imbibe and teach error ? Banish the thought. “ The fallibility of Jesus is the epitaph of Christianity.” ¹

Lest we should be charged with being “ Apollinarian ” we emphasise the fact we have ever kept in view, that the New Testament is as clear with regard to our Lord’s humanity as it is concerning His Deity. He travelled through the stages of infancy, boyhood and manhood. He was exposed to all the inconveniences that belong to our nature. The higher attributes of our being were His also. Reason, conscience, memory, will, affections, were essential appendages of that human soul which the Son of God took into union with His Divine Nature. His finite nature, though pure and sinless, was yet necessarily limited in its resources. Touching His

¹ Panton, *The Godhead of Jesus*.

inferior nature He was "*perfect Man.*" The Godhead, as we have before remarked, was not humanised, nor the humanity deified, by the blending of the two natures. Each retained its essential character, properties and attributes, distinct, unchanged and unchangeable.

The New Testament writers state the facts, and the facts are that Jesus was Man and God at the same time : unmistakably man, for He shared in all the ordinary human experiences ; undeniably God, for all the attributes of Deity are His. We need nothing more to make it indubitably certain that this is He Whose Godhead was attested by the Voice from the more excellent glory, and that "*God . . . hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.*" "*Behold the Man,*" and we see Him, "*Who being the Holiest among the mighty, and the Mightiest among the holy, has lifted with His pierced Hand empires off their hinges, has turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.*"¹ This is "*My Lord and My God.*"

"The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance ; so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man" (Art. II.).

¹ *Jean Paul.*

SUMMARY

Before the Incarnation Christ was God. In that event He became Man. The honoured instrument in the birth was a Virgin. Since that event he has been, and will ever be, God-Man. Leading to the Birth of Christ there were two lines of history. The one line was Divine, leading down from past Eternity. Before His birth, from all Eternity, the Son of God was with His Father on the Throne of Heaven. The other line was human. In it was traced the lineage of Jesus Christ in human history from the Creation to His Birth in Bethlehem.

Toward His Birth, from the beginning of time, the two lines converged ; and in His Birth the Divine and the Human were united in the unique Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹

¹ See *The Jesus of our Fathers* (Good).

II

THE RESURRECTION

REV. J. RUSSELL HOWDEN

CHRISTIANITY is an historical religion, taking its rise in a series of historical events. These events cluster round the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Life and death are experiences which are common to the race. But resurrection is utterly outside our experience; at any rate our experience as individuals, and for the most part outside the experience of the race. It is therefore not to be wondered at that any such claim as this by Christians on behalf of their Master and Author should be most sharply challenged and scrutinised. Nor, as a matter of fact, does the New Testament either obscure or shrink from that challenge. The claim is recognised as foundational. "If Christ be not raised then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." As Evangelical Christians we accept and attest the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as true.

As showing how fundamental for Christian doctrine the Resurrection of Christ is, let us briefly remind ourselves of some of the results which follow if it be a fact. In Scripture the Resurrection is represented as an event unique in the history of the race. There are a few cases of resuscitation recorded in the Bible, but no other case of Resur-

rection prior to the Lord's. The partial resurrection recorded in St Matt. xxvii. 52 is so dependent upon His that the whole forms but one event. And St Paul draws the conclusion that by this fact, even if it stood alone, Jesus is marked out as the Son of God in a unique sense. Further, if the Resurrection be a fact, it invests the death of Christ with special significance. And therefore also it must profoundly affect our theories of the Atonement. It is not the purpose of this essay to explore these results, but to merely point out that such results are inevitably present. Some other results as they seem to affect humanity generally, and Christians in particular, will have to be considered later.

In the next place it is important to state as clearly as possible what is meant by the term "resurrection." Resurrection is a word which concerns the material and not the spiritual nature of Christ. I confess I find it impossible to assign any adequate meaning to the phrase "spiritual resurrection." According to the New Testament, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not merely His survival after death. It is emphatically declared that Christ has rendered death inoperative, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel. The Resurrection was as much a physical fact and experience for Jesus Christ as death was.

It is of course true that the word "death" is frequently used in Scripture with a spiritual reference. Men are spoken of as being dead in trespasses and sins. But in this ethical and moral

use of the word the metaphorical character of the expression is plainly to be seen. When Jesus died His spirit did not die, but His body. And when Jesus rose from the dead it was not His spirit that was affected, except in a secondary sense, but His body. Whatever may have to be said concerning the possibility of general human resurrection, it is quite plain that the New Testament narratives and addresses intend us to understand that after the resurrection the body of Jesus was no longer in the grave.

Now this involves a miracle, indeed the most stupendous miracle in the Bible. There is a materialistic philosophy which denies all possibility of miracle on *à priori* grounds. With these grounds of objection this essay is not immediately concerned. They need to be examined in their proper place, and the logical fallacy underlying them to be exposed. I will only add here that mere materialism was never more ridiculous as a philosophy than to-day. For natural science itself, which exists to investigate material phenomena, recognises now more clearly than ever the need for the spiritual to explain the material. If God is, then all things are possible which are consistent with His being and attributes. "Why should it be deemed a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" If God—whether by processes of organic evolution or not does not matter for our present purpose—if God can produce the living out of the non-living, how is it illogical to conceive of His restoring to life that which was dead?

After all, miracle to-day is widely recognised to

be mainly a matter of proof. We turn then to investigate the alleged proofs of this greatest of all miracles.

There are three, and only three, classes of facts of which the human mind has to take cognizance. These are mathematical, scientific and historical. And each class is the subject of its own appropriate methods of proof. The proper proof of a mathematical fact lies in the reason. Such facts are therefore universal, and that is what gives mathematics for some minds its great attractiveness. Twice two always makes four. There is a suggestion of finality about it which is attractive and soothing to minds rendered restless by the thought upheaval of their age.

The next group of facts is that known as scientific. Their proper method of proof is not reason, but experiment. There seems to be no particular reason why two atoms of hydrogen, rather than, say, three, should conjoin with one of oxygen to form water. Scientific proof therefore always lies in the direction of experiment. But this method also yields very complete and satisfactory verification. It is not perhaps so complete or so universal as the methods of mathematics, but it does convince.

The other class of facts differs from both the foregoing. Historical facts can neither be proved at the bar of reason, nor can they be the subject of experiment. You cannot experiment with bringing Julius Cæsar to Britain, nor with raising a man from the dead. Indeed, if you could raise someone from the dead to-morrow, that would not of itself prove that Christ was raised nineteen

centuries ago. All this is, or ought to be, very obvious. And yet you do from time to time meet with demands solemnly put forward by opponents of Christianity that the miracle of the Resurrection should be repeated.

Historical proof then consists neither in reason nor experiment. Yet history has its own proper paraphernalia of evidence. Proof of an alleged historical fact must be sought in one or more of the four following lines of evidence :

- (1) Human witnesses of the event.
- (2) Institutions taking their rise in, and explained by, the event.
- (3) Customs similarly to be accounted for.
- (4) Material remains, topographical or otherwise.

We can, for example, apply these methods of proof to discover how far it is a fact that Julius Cæsar invaded this country. There are no living witnesses to consult. We are therefore thrown back upon documentary evidence furnished by contemporaries. In this case such documentary evidence chiefly lies in Cæsar's own *De Bello Gallico*. There are no institutions, so far as I am aware, which profess to take their rise from this event. So that line of proof is lacking. For customs, however, we have the fact that a certain amount of our jurisprudence is founded upon the Roman code. And this, though it goes to prove Roman occupation, does not directly prove Cæsar's own presence here. The same remark applies also to the fourth line of proof, which in this case consists in the presence of Roman remains.

We are here obviously in the presence of a very

different set of evidence to that which could be marshalled for a mathematical or scientific fact. And yet the common sense of thinking men does not hesitate to accept the Cæsarean invasion of Britain as a fact.

But it may be objected, there is a difference between such a fact of history as Cæsar's invasion and such an alleged fact as the Resurrection. To begin with, nothing much for modern practical purposes hangs upon whether Cæsar himself came to Britain or not. But if Christ's Resurrection be a fact it has important consequences which continue to this day. Moreover, a Roman invasion is not an event of a character which contradicts all our experience, while the Resurrection is.

Such objections as these are perfectly reasonable. And yet, if our reasoning has been sound so far, there is nothing for it but to reaffirm that these four methods constitute the only possible means of arriving at truth concerning history; and that therefore all we can do, or be required to do, is to see to it that our proofs under these four categories are as cogent as it is possible for them to be.

We turn accordingly to review the materials available to enable us to form a judgment upon the great question, Did Jesus rise from the dead? And first we have to deal with those who claimed to be eye-witnesses. They are, of course, themselves dead and gone, but we are fortunate in possessing documentary evidence of considerable amount which appears adequately to represent their testimony. In all witnesses, whether the

witness is oral or written, a great deal depends upon personal character. The qualifications of a good witness will be found to be fourfold :

- (1) That the alleged fact fell within the reach of his senses.
- (2) That he observed and attended to it.
- (3) That he possess a fair amount of intelligence and memory.
- (4) That he be free from sinister or misleading interest in the matter, and that he be truthful.

Now from the writings of these witnesses we can infer a good deal concerning the writers. It will, I think, strike the candid reader of the New Testament that its writers, especially the original eleven, were plain working men, unimaginative and dull, rather than quick and brilliant, in their intellectual reactions. The Lord Jesus had, for some months before His death, been teaching them that He was to be killed and rise again. But it is quite evident that they utterly failed to understand Him or believe what He was trying to teach. Christ's enemies seem to have had a superstitious dread that something was going to happen both in regard to the death of John the Baptist and to His own. Nothing untoward did take place as a matter of fact after John's murder, though guilty Herod was in a panic about it. Yet the dread persisted and revived amongst the authorities when they put to death the Lord Jesus Christ. But the disciples knew that no such miracle had taken place in John's case. They seem to have believed up to the last moment that their Master would

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escape. But when that hope was disappointed their faith was eclipsed.

Further it is clear from the narratives that they had everything to lose and nothing to gain from the point of view of material benefit by this testimony. Their foes went all lengths to silence them. The authorities imprisoned them, tortured them, put them to death; did everything in short that it was possible to do to stifle their testimony, save only one thing. One thing would have nipped this dangerous agitation in the bud, established the shaken prestige of the rulers, and covered the disciples of Christ with that ridicule which is the surest solvent for any enthusiasm. And that one thing was to produce the body of Jesus. If the Resurrection had not taken place this surely could have been done. For the witness began to be publicly given within six weeks of the event, and in the very place where the event was alleged to have happened. The witnesses, though not a great crowd, were numerous and unanimous. And it is a subsidiary fact to be noticed that morally their conduct was irreproachable.

The question might be raised, Why did not the Lord Jesus appear to His enemies as well as friends? There may have been several reasons for this. It will be perhaps sufficient to adduce this single consideration. If Christ had shown Himself alive to His foes, one of two things must have happened. Either such men would have been still unconvinced, in which case all the positive evidence would have been rendered nugatory. Or they would have been convinced. In which

case the story would have been naturally regarded as a national fraud arising from anti-Roman agitation. And furthermore, the valuable sifting and testing of the evidence would have been lost.

The acute reader will have observed that in the foregoing argument I have made one assumption. I have taken for granted that in our New Testament we have the actual literary remains of the witnesses. I only call attention to the assumption here, for this most important question is being fully discussed in the present volume in the chapters written by the Rev. T. C. Hammond and the Rev. G. T. Manley respectively.

In the next place we have to inquire as to whether there is now on earth an institution the rise of which can be most reasonably explained by reference to the alleged fact. Such an institution in this case is found in the Church of God. Had there been no disciples to witness to the Resurrection there would have been no Church. The whole burden of the Apostolic preaching was "this Jesus hath God raised up." The Church indeed was founded, as Keim tauntingly wrote, "upon an empty grave." Now the difficulties and failures of the Church of God have been, and are, many and grievous. Yet undoubtedly it accomplished a mighty moral miracle in the Roman world. And it has been the source of whatever amelioration has been brought about in human conditions ever since.

Morally, intellectually, artistically, scientifically, politically, materially, humanity has advanced in

proportion as it has become identified with the Church.

Again in this Church we note two customs either of which, separately, or still more both of them taken together, point back to the Resurrection as supplying the readiest and most reasonable explanation of them. These customs are the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. The supper was instituted "in the same night in which He was betrayed." It speaks, and still speaks, of His death. Such a memory of their murdered Master might have lingered among His personal friends while they lived; but as they died off there could have been no point in continuing the custom. We may venture to compare the case of the Balaclava dinner. Here the survivors of the famous battle were accustomed to gather together every year to recall the old days and to remember their dead comrades. But the feast has well-nigh, if not altogether, ceased by now. For the survivors themselves are gone. But the Lord's Supper has not ceased. And I submit that the only reasonable explanation is that the terrible death which was all that it would have recalled to the disciples had been for ever in their minds swallowed up in victory. And the only victory that really overcomes death is resurrection.

This becomes yet more impressive if taken in conjunction with the observance of the Lord's Day. The early disciples were all Jews, and one of the results of their discipleship was to make them more zealous of observing the Mosaic Law. They were "daily in the temple worshipping and praising

God." And yet these zealous men, quietly and without any hesitation or recorded discussion on the subject, added to and gradually substituted for the seventh day of the week the first. Again the most natural explanation of their action is found in that which the first day of the week commemorated for them. And that was their Lord's Resurrection. The first day was the Lord's Day.

Lastly we turn to inquire whether there are any material remains which may serve as evidence of the Resurrection. All we can show in this connection is that the accounts of the Lord's Death, Burial and Resurrection suggest a topography which agrees with the features to be found on the spot to-day. The examination of this evidence would extend far beyond the limits not only of this chapter but of the whole of the present volume. But fortunately such examination is not here necessary. The interested inquirer can obtain all the material requisite from the reports of the Palestine Exploration Society or from such popular books as the *Patrollers of Palestine*. So far as it has been possible to reconstruct ancient Jerusalem, it may be said with complete confidence that every feature ascertained fits perfectly into the Gospel narrative. Though we may freely admit there is nothing positive in all this, yet it is good that there is nothing which presents difficulty.

There is one other form, not exactly of proof, but rather of what I might call corroboration, to which it may be convenient to refer here. There are in most departments of human thought certain facts, which when discovered avouch them-

selves as true, by their unifying effect upon other segments of knowledge. Such a unifying effect, for example, is found in the law of gravitation. What Newton's great discovery is to physics, that the Resurrection is to Scripture. If the Resurrection be true, it interlocks the whole Bible. Seemingly contradictory prophecies become reconciled. The dual aspect of the Messiah's coming becomes understandable. Human life itself becomes invested with a new meaning and a new hopefulness. It is not too much to describe the Resurrection as the keystone of the arch of God's revelation. And this corroborative effect is the more impressive just because it is indirect. What we have, I hope, decided to be true on a candid examination of the effects is discovered to have a priori justification.

Certain attempts have been made to evade the force of such arguments as I have tried to present. These attempts may be grouped under three heads. We may describe them as the swoon (1) theory, the hallucination theory and the vision (2) theory. The first-named supposes that Jesus did not really die, but that He was laid in the tomb unconscious, and that though sorely wounded He recovered and managed somehow to escape. To this it may be replied that the soldiers charged with the execution certified that Jesus was dead. And further that a weak and wounded man creeping forth from the tomb, and requiring to be nursed back to health, would not be very likely to impress his friends with the idea of his being a triumphant conqueror over death. And again we

may ask, If Jesus did not die on the Cross, when and where did He die? The hallucination theory also breaks down on examination. Hallucinations are always the outcome of fixed prepossessions. But the disciples had no fixed prepossessions that Jesus was going to rise from the dead. It was all the other way about. It was hard indeed to persuade any of them that the event had occurred. Further, the hallucination, if such it were, was not confined to one or two people, but was shared by the whole company of those in closest association with Jesus. The hallucinations, too, so widespread, presented this strange feature, that they continued for some time, then suddenly ceased. And lastly, this theory does not account for the disappearance of the body of Jesus.

The vision theory takes its stand upon the idea of a spiritual manifestation. It differs from the other two in that it does recognise the presence of the supernatural. But there is not much to be gained by anybody if it is only a matter of substituting one miracle for another. This theory, like the previous one, fails to explain what became of the Lord's body. And it fails too to take account of the fact that Scripture always distinguishes sharply between visions and the Resurrection appearances of Christ.

We may turn from our investigation with the assurance that the Resurrection, as it is the unique, so also it is the best attested, fact in history. And if the Resurrection be true, nothing is too good to be true. For it means that Jesus is alive for evermore; that at the very Throne of the

Universe is One who is eternally man as well as God ; that the material is not divorced from the spiritual ; that man's body, as well as his soul, is included in Christ's redeeming work. And thus it answers some of the deepest questions of the human heart. For if Christ be raised from the dead He is the first-fruits of the harvest which comprehends ourselves ; and therefore we survive in Christ not merely as discarnate spirits but as human beings. It is our human nature which in Christ's nature is in Heaven now. And therefore we, body, soul and spirit, are in Him capable of receiving the inheritance which He won for us. No wonder the Resurrection transformed those disciples. May its power touch and transform our lives.

III

THE ATONEMENT

REV. C. H. TITTERTON

IN an exposition on the great subject of the Atonement it is necessary, first of all, to draw attention to the dual use of the word. For its Biblical use and meaning must be sharply distinguished from its use in theology. In theology Atonement is a term which covers the whole sacrificial and redemptive work of Christ. And it is in this latter sense that it is used in the present chapter. "In the Old Testament atonement is the English word used to translate the Hebrew words which mean 'cover,' 'coverings' or 'to cover.' Atonement (at-one-ment) is, therefore, not a translation of the Hebrew, but a purely theologic concept. The Levitical offerings 'covered' the sins of Israel until and in anticipation of the Cross, but did not 'take away' (Heb. x. 4) those sins. These were the 'sins done aforetime' ('covered' meanwhile by the Levitical sacrifices), which God 'passed over' (Rom. iii. 25)—for which 'passing over' God's righteousness was never vindicated until, in the Cross, Jesus Christ was 'set forth a propitiation.' It was the Cross, not the Levitical sacrifices, which made 'at-one-ment.' The Old Testament sacrifices enabled God to go on with a guilty people because they typified the Cross. To

the *offerer* they were the confession of his desert of death, and the expression of his faith ; to God they were the ' shadows ' (Heb. x. 1) of which Christ was the reality."

From the above quotation, by way of necessary preface, it will be seen that the great question of the Atonement is: "How is God to treat the guilty?" And this, as an urgent anxiety of the conscience, and not merely as a curious speculation of the intellect, must be ever kept in view as that which originates Evangelical theology, and is in fact its starting-point.

But while this is so, yet a growing tendency to the speculative rather than the experimental is to be noticed generally to-day, this speculation, as in certain other periods of past history, now as then, being only too often accompanied by a growing ignorance of Divine grace in the practical region of Christian experience. For whenever Rationalism is in the ascendancy the gospel of free grace, with its assurance of a present, free and complete salvation, is made of little or of none effect.

Now while it is evident from Scripture that the Atonement is a *mystery* of the Christian faith like the Incarnation, it is equally evident that, like the Incarnation, it is a *fact* of the most vital and momentous character. It is also equally evident, indeed of necessity follows, that it is not a mere theory. Yet, though this is so, theories of the Atonement have long abounded, "transaction" or "ransom" theories, "satisfaction" or "substitution" theories, "governmental" or "acceptilation"

theories, while at the present time the so-called "moral influence" theory is very generally accepted and taught. On an examination of these so-called "theories" all seems to point to the conclusion that the leading exponents of the same in the past, such as Anselm and Abelard, together with their many followers, have emphasised, or rather over-emphasised, more or less certain aspects of the Atonement, to the detriment of other important factors, or have, as in the case of Abelard, belittled the most vital aspect of all.

In reality it is a misnomer to designate the views or systems of these writers' "theories" at all, for each contains some true and real element of the Atonement as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Another modern tendency which needs to be mentioned is the objection to the *forensic*¹ terms used or implied in the Scriptures with reference to the doctrine of the Atonement, terms such as are commonly used in courts of justice, as, for example, satisfaction to a broken law, penalty for sin, ransom for sinners, redemption price by blood, whilst exception is taken by some to such expressions as "the wrath of God," "the wrath of the Lamb," as being incompatible with the nature of God Who is love. But against this objection the experience of multitudes through the past centuries can be placed, showing that the grave nature of the Atonement and its necessity as set forth in the Scriptures have been brought home to the hearts and consciences of guilty sinners more effectually by the use of forensic language, meaning what

¹ See Smeaton, *Doctrine of the Atonement*, pp. 12, 13.

it says, than by any toning down of Divine revelation, a toning down which emasculates the Atonement of its vital saving truths and makes the Word of God and the New Covenant sealed by the Saviour's precious blood of none effect.

To take up, then, the exposition of our subject from the evangelical point of view, our belief is that there is no fact more abundantly proved in the Scriptures than the *fact* of the Atonement.

As a fact it is the very essence of the New Testament teaching, a cardinal doctrine throughout, and is "the central truth of Christianity and the great theme of Scripture."

For all through the Scriptures the chief object of revelation is seen to be "the unfolding of this method of reconciliation by which men, once estranged from God (through sin), might be restored to a right relation, and even to a better than their primeval standing."

The need for the Atonement premises some terrible necessity. And Scripture declares this necessity to be due to sin. For it is for *sin* that Atonement is made. What then is sin?

Sin in the Scriptures is declared to be "lawlessness," "a specific evil, an evil so offensive and malignant, and attended with consequences so sweeping and disastrous, as to necessitate a separation between the holy God and those who commit it—a separation which can only be removed by means which shall leave the character and government of God uncompromised, and shall stay the ravages of so fearful a plague."

This separation is necessarily inevitable, as,

from His nature as an infinitely holy God, God must always hate sin and withdraw from the sinner. For His displeasure against sinners is a real and terrible thing. "His wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." ¹

The effects of sin, therefore, are immense, for they comprehend the loss of innocence, and of original righteousness, and, above all, the loss of fellowship and communion with God. Sin has effectually involved mankind in spiritual death. For "the wages of sin is death." This death comprehends death both of body and soul. As to the body, it has become "this corruptible"; as to the soul, it is "dead in trespasses and sins," "alienated from the life of God," and is under the sentence of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Into this lost and fallen condition, this condition of depravity, the whole human race has come through the sin of *one*,² and so the whole race is a fallen race and lies under condemnation. For "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."³ In view of mankind's helpless and hopeless condition God Himself intervened and wrought a great salvation by means of sacrificial mediation. The Divine plan of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures presents God as Just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, Who is declared to be the One Mediator with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and Propitiation for our sins. The Old Testament sacrificial system which God gave to Israel in the time of the Theocracy continually kept God's

¹ Rom. i. 18.

² Rom. v. 12.

³ Rom. iii. 23.

holiness in view and showed the vital necessity of expiation for sin if man were to be in the position to approach his Maker ; the consciousness of this necessity was most of all driven home on the Great Day of Atonement. In the Old Testament the Atonement is dealt with in the fullest manner in type, while the New Testament presents the great reconciliation between God and man, as effected by the Great Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross at Calvary ; a reconciliation which showed that the *separation* between God and man was done away and that man through simple faith in Jesus could step on to redemption ground.

How unmistakably the Lord Jesus applied the Old Testament prophecies and predictions, the types concerning the Suffering Messiah and Servant of the Lord to Himself, all pointing to a coming expiation for sin, is seen in the following passages. For after His resurrection He opened up the Scriptures as to their true content and meaning to His disciples, saying : “ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” “ And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written,

and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”¹ The key to the interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures is thus given by the Risen Lord Himself. It is to be noticed in the foregoing passages that the Lord points not only to His sufferings, death and resurrection, but also to the great positive result of all—namely, *the forgiveness of sins*. Here a direct relation is declared to exist between human sin and His death. This was the great fundamental preaching of Paul afterwards: “I delivered unto you *first of all* that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the scriptures.”² The same was also the preaching of the other Apostles, as we shall presently see.

As we view the Gospels as a whole we cannot but remark that the Lord previous to His death on the Cross announced His atonement with reserve. But apparently the reason was that the idea of a suffering Messiah had become obsolete, predictions such as Is. lii. 13, liii., and Ps. cx. 4 being disregarded. Few at Christ’s Coming thought on these things save Simeon, Zacharias and John the Baptist. Even the disciples of His presence were “slow of heart” to believe this truth, and viewed His Coming Kingdom as one about to be entered on without the atoning death which was to be in truth its foundation and ground. It is noteworthy in view of modern thought to see how they tried to explain the fact away. Even

¹ Luke xxiv. 44-47.

² 1 Cor. xv. 3.

that remarkable conversation on the Mount of Transfiguration seems to have had no permanent effect upon them. They were *prejudiced*, and only the accomplished fact proved by the Resurrection could open the way for the Lord's teaching to be fully comprehended after the bestowal of the Spirit.¹

But that the Lord gave full instruction concerning this all-important subject both before and after His resurrection is proved from Luke xxiv. And can we doubt that the great subject of all subjects, which was brought before the wondering gaze of the listeners during the forty days before His Ascension, was the Old Testament doctrine of His all-atoning death, contained in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, and its fulfilment in Himself? The statements of Christ as presented to us in the Gospels which give His testimony to the Atonement may be few, but they are invaluable, for therein we have the absolute truth upon the subject. The sayings may be few, but they are comprehensive, and taken together present that magnificent whole—a gospel for sinners.

What can surpass as an expression of wondrous atonement the great declaration of salvation contained in John iii. 16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"?—a declaration which has brought unspeakable peace to myriads of souls. Here, in the simplest of language that a child can understand Christ plainly teaches that

¹ John xiv. 25, 26.

the Atonement proceeds from the *love* of God. "God is love." "And God so loved the world." In John iii. 16 is seen the harmony of justice and love. There is a perfect equipoise, so to speak. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7), and "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to suffer the death of the Cross. These must be viewed together. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The grand declaration of John iii. 16 also exhibits the *value* of the sacrifice from the dignity of the only begotten Son of God. Such a sacrifice was of infinite value and sufficient to cancel all sin. "They shall not perish." But while the remission of sins is the immediate end of the death of Christ, as we have already pointed out, a still further end is the communication of divine life—"have everlasting life." This is the great consummation—God's free gift. Viewed as a whole, therefore, sin is seen to be the deadly cause necessitating the Atonement. And this method of satisfaction as expressed in John iii. 16 must have been vitally necessary, for otherwise there could be no other reason conceivably sufficiently important for God so to abase Himself and to be made in fashion as a man and suffer death upon the Cross. It is far from meeting the case to suggest, as is done, that it was merely meant to impress the human mind with a conviction of God's love. For this view would be to make this wondrous declaration of God's love as little more than a mere drama intended to make an inward impression. Such a suggestion not only

avoids the real issue—namely, the upholding the moral government of God—but also disregards the vicarious sacrifice represented in John iii. 16, the central truth of the whole subject, as though it was not necessary on God's part for the ransom of sinners and the putting away of sin. But John iii. 16 is set forth to meet the need of mankind perishing by reason of the incurable disease of sin, and modern theories which ignore the heinousness of sin and the Divine claims, entirely miss the intention and truth of Christ's Atonement.

In another saying our Saviour definitely states the necessity of His death in the words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."¹ This declaration points both to the coming fruit of His Passion, the redemption of precious souls, the joy set before Him, and also to the way by which the results could be attained—namely, by death alone.

To the questions, Why was the death of the Son of God necessary? Was there no other way to meet the necessities of the case? the answer appears plain—namely, that as the sentence on sin is death, so the means provided to do away with sin and death, according to God's wisdom and saving plan, is revealed in the Scriptures to be by the vicarious or substitutional death of another. The thought that justice demanded satisfaction has been prominent at all times and everywhere down the ages, and it is undeniable that the Mosaic institutions, as Divinely ordered, were

¹ John xii. 24.

expiatory offerings and not mere forms of worship. The victims bore the guilt and died for the sinner. The very names of the sacrifices suggest this great truth. Blood-shedding is the central thought—a giving of soul for soul—life for life—for “the blood is the life.” The reason why the blood possesses such value is clearly explained in Lev. xvii. 11 : “For the life of the flesh is in the blood : and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls.”¹ The value of the “life” is the measure of the value of the “blood.” This gives the blood of Christ its inconceivable value. When it was shed the sinless God-man gave His life. The Incarnation of the Son of God is therefore seen to be for the purpose of effecting atonement. This is clearly and distinctly stated in Scripture : “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same ; that *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” ; “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” ; “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”²

The modern view that “Christ revealed the Divine love by dying for us, and the revelation of the love in its power over our heart and life—this alone redeems us,” is a shallow and altogether inadequate conception of redemption. It is more in accordance with the mind of Scripture to say :

¹ נֶפֶשׁ, soul, life.

² Heb. ii. 14, 15 ; 1 John iii. 8 ; Heb. i. 3.

“ Christ redeemed us by dying for us, and by so redeeming us revealed the Divine love ; the death itself was the great factor in our redemption, as well as the love which it reveals.”

The death of Christ does indeed discover the depth of the Divine love. No truth is more clearly stated than this. “ God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ”¹ ; “ Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us ”² ; “ Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”³ And equal emphasis is laid on the fact that the love exhibited by the Great Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary was not only the Father’s love to mankind as expressed in John iii. 16, but the love of the Son Himself. “ I am the good shepherd,” He said : “ the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” And of His life He said : “ I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again.”⁴ The testimony of the Apostle Paul was : “ The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”⁵ Both the Father’s love and the Son’s love provided the atonement, which is the redemption ground and basis of the reconciliation. Truly the Atonement exhibits the love of the Holy Trinity. But still again, in order to grasp more truly the greatness of the love exhibited by the Cross of Christ, it is necessary to go far beyond the thought that the Cross is merely a presentation of the love of God, intended only to attract mankind and thereby to bring about a great

¹ Rom. v. 8.

² 1 John iii. 16.

³ 1 John iv. 10.

⁴ John x. 11, 18.

⁵ Gal. ii. 20.

reformation among men. Christ died upon the Cross not merely to attract but to *save*. "Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*." ¹

The deadliness of sin, with its terrible consequences, involved the Son of God as the Saviour of the world in a positive work of salvation of infinite magnitude, the great and absolute preliminary being the putting away of sin, the removal of guilt, the ultimate end being to make a true reconciliation, to "bring us to God." How very far removed from being a mere "moral influence" Christ's Passion really is, is gathered from the explicit statements of the Lord Himself: "The Son of Man came . . . to give his life *a ransom* for many." ² "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." ³ The ransom is thus identical with sacrifice—the ransom was a satisfaction to justice and a sacrifice to justice. Scripture declares that in view of the broken law the Son of God became incarnate, was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." ⁴ For the purpose of the Incarnation was redemption.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," ⁵ redeemed us who were "sold under sin." ⁶ The law's standard is not lowered, for Christ's work was a full and perfect satisfaction to the law's demands.

By His obedience, by His whole righteousness, active and passive, He as our Representative and

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁴ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

² Matt. xx. 28.

⁵ Gal. iii. 13.

³ Matt. xxvi. 28.

⁶ Rom. vii. 14.

Substitute, He in Whose heart was the law of God, has fulfilled all that the law demands, and by His precious blood shed on Calvary the redemption price was paid ¹ and the claims of the broken law were satisfied. As we proceed it becomes more and more evident that Christ's Passion is very much more than a mere "moral influence." Especially is this so when it is recognised that in some mysterious way Christ at Calvary is seen to be identified with sin itself. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." ² The identification is seen to be on behalf of sinners. In the above declaration the vicarious and substitutionary nature of the sacrifice for sinners is clearly and unmistakably set forth in the words "for us," and other Scriptures confirm this substitution, as, for example: "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died *for* us." ³ "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life *for* us." ⁴

Other passages there are in which the death of Christ is distinctly stated to be not only for *sinner*s but for *sins*. "For Christ also hath once suffered for *sins*, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh" ⁵; "our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our *sins*" ⁶; "Christ died for our *sins*" ⁷; "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." ⁸

¹ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

² 2 Cor. v. 21.

³ 1 Thess. v. 9, 10.

⁴ 1 John iii. 16 (R.V.).

⁵ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

⁶ Col. i. 3, 4.

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 3.

⁸ Rom. iv. 25.

The preposition used in the preceding passages and translated "for" varies in its use from "instead of" to "on account of," and in each case it points to a real and vital substitution. A real and personal substitution must be accepted unless the plain interpretation of Scripture is denied.¹ In the Old Testament Lev. xvi. 6 states in the simplest and most unequivocal language the mind and commands of God as to substitution and vicarious sacrifice on the great day of Atonement: "And Aaron shall offer his bullock for the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house." The Hebrew preposition here rendered *for* is literally "on behalf of," the strongest word that can be used to express substitution, and which gives force to the expression used in Heb. ix. 7, where the corresponding preposition in Greek is used. Illustrations of this substitution abound in the New Testament in regard to salvation. Our Lord said: "This is my body, which is given *for* you"; "My blood which is shed *for* you"; "My flesh, which I will give *for* the life of the world"; "The good shepherd giveth his life *for* the sheep"; "I lay down my life *for* the sheep."

The language of the Epistles is just the same:

¹ Much is made of the force of the Greek prepositions *περί*, *ὑπέρ* and *ἀντί*. It is probable that too much stress is occasionally laid on the emphasis of each. But in Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45 and 1 Tim. ii. 6 the substitution of Christ, as indicated by the preposition *ἀντί* and the words *λύτρον* or *ἀντίλυτρον* is proved beyond all possible doubt. *λύτρον* is emphasized by *ἀντί*. For an able exposition on the word *ἀντί* see the *Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement* by Professor Crawford, pp. 20, 21, 60-64.

“In due time Christ died *for* the ungodly”;
“While we were yet sinners Christ died *for* us”;
“Delivered him up *for* us all”; “Who gave himself *for* us, that he might redeem us”;
“That he should taste death *for* every man”;
“He hath made him sin *for* us, who knew no sin”; “The Son of God who loved me and gave himself *for* me”; “Christ being made a curse *for* us.”¹

As we examine the above statements they, too, are seen to represent far more than a mere moral attraction; much rather do they point to a special vicarious redemptive work for sinners to save them from sin and death.

That it is impossible to regard the death of Christ on the Cross and His blood-shedding as being a mere spectacular display of suffering, another and infinitely more important aspect of it will show. Calvary must be viewed *Godward* as well as *manward*. The Divine revelation to man is that *without the shedding of blood* there is no remission of sins, and (quite apart from being a mere spectacle of His passion) the blood of Jesus is set forth in the New Testament as possessing an infinite atoning power, a power to cleanse from all sin.

For throughout the Old Testament the ritual of the blood takes a first place in the official work of the High Priest making atonement, on the ground that “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul,”² also the infinite

¹ See Dale, *Christian Doctrine*, pp. 226-231.

² Lev. xvii. 11.

efficacy of the all-atoning power of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son incarnate, the Great High Priest, is the prevailing theme of the New. For example, it is stated to be the ground of the Christian's *forgiveness*, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."¹ It is the ground of the Christian's *justification*: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood"²; "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."³ It is the ground of the Christian's *reconciliation*: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself."⁴ It meets all the believer's needs for *cleansing*: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."⁵ Scripture's closing *Te Deum* is one largely of praise for the wonder-working power of the Great Redeemer's blood: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."⁶ Such is the marvellous, the amazing position of the Christian through the efficacy of the blood. All a positive work of salvation.

As we endeavour to summarise the blessings resulting from the Atonement the greatest and most joyful is to be found in the reconciliation

¹ Eph. i. 7.

⁴ Col. i. 20.

² Rom. iii. 24, 25.

⁵ 1 John i. 7.

³ Rom. v. 9.

⁶ Rev. i. 5, 6.

which has been made—in the “at-one-ment” now an accomplished fact—God is propitiated and man is reconciled. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *reconciliation*”¹ (Rom. v. 6-11).

Reconciliation (*καταλλαγὴν*) points to an utter change—a new stage of things. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. v. 17). The awful, unbridgeable gulf of separation between God and man has been done away by Jesus Christ, a redemption-ground has been prepared upon which the sinner is invited to step and there take his stand. God, says the Apostle, “hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (18, 19). It is the Evangel of the New Testament.

This reconciliation has reference to both Jew and Gentile alike, for the purpose of the reconciliation of Jesus Christ was that “he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. . . . For through him we

¹ τὴν καταλλαγὴν, the reconciliation.

both have access by one Spirit unto the Father " (Eph. ii. 16-18).

The effects of the Cross are immense, beyond all human comprehension, since " the blood of the Cross " affects all things. " For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself " (Col. i. 19-20). " Be ye reconciled " is the Gospel's urgent call to the sinner. For the veil is rent in twain from the top to the bottom and the mercy seat lies for ever open to those who draw near in reliance upon the all-atoning blood of Jesus. " Having, therefore, boldness (*παρρησία*, free utterance) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new (*πρόσφατον*, newly slain) and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near . . . in full assurance of faith . . ." (Heb. x. 19-22).

For the condition whereby the sinner can become partaker of the benefits of the great atonement effected by Christ upon the Cross for him is stated simply in John iii. 16 : " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The condition is faith, which has as its basis true repentance. Our Lord repeatedly declares that what men are required to do and are condemned because they do not do, is to believe on Him. He was lifted up upon the Cross in order to bestow eternal life on the simple condition of faith.

The saving benefits of the Atonement are only received *by faith*. Scriptures abound asserting this fact. Faith is the saving fact : “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ” (Eph. ii. 8, 9). And “ the specific act of saving faith which unites to Christ, and is the commencement, root and organ of our whole spiritual life, terminates upon Christ’s Person and work as Mediator, as presented in the offers and promises of the Gospel.” And as we contemplate Christ’s work as Mediator, as the Great Antitype of Aaron, His mediation is presented to us in a twofold aspect : first, in His earthly ministry, which terminated on the Cross : “ For the Son of Man came to minister and give His life a ransom for many ” ; secondly, in His heavenly ministry, as the Risen and Ascended Lord, Who “ ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

Such was the surpassing excellency and infinite perfection of His offering that the Father “ raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” ¹

And this exaltation and right of access into the heavenlies is declared to belong to Christ, the God-man, in virtue of the infinite expiatory efficacy of His blood, for “ by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,” “ into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God *for us*.” ²

The suffering of the Cross was succeeded by the ministry of intercession from the Throne, “ Crowned with glory and honour,” the Man,

¹ Eph. i. 20.

² Heb. ix. 12, 24.

Christ Jesus, Jesus, the Son of God, "a Priest-King" upon His Throne, the Great High Priest, the one Advocate with the Father "continueth ever."

"But this Priest, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth *to make intercession* for them. For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did *once*, when He offered up Himself."¹ The believer is thus secure. For "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."² This was the Redeemer's joy, that all that the Father had given to Him should come to Him; joy that, glorified, the promise of the Father would be His, the gift of the Spirit, through whom sinners would be born again, indwelt, baptized and sealed until the day of redemption.

For Christ's Atonement constitutes a perfect redemption, a redemption which comprehends the *body* as well as the Spirit in its ultimate redemptive effects. "Ye were sealed," says the Apostle, "with that holy spirit of promise, which is the

¹ Heb. ix. 24-27.

² Rom. viii. 33, 34.

earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”¹

The *body* of man comes under the term “purchased possession.” This is the believer’s hope. “But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,”² which redemption shall take place at the Coming or Parousia of the Lord. The object of the Christian hope is the Crucified, Risen and Ascended Christ, Who is coming again. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body [the body of our low estate], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”³

How immeasurably removed, therefore, the doctrine of the Atonement, together with its blessed redemptive results, really is from being a mere theoretical speculation, it has been our endeavour briefly to show. “Deep calleth unto deep.” The depth of man’s need as a sinner called forth from the infinite depth of the Divine love our great salvation. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” There is no speculation here—but a mighty fact. “Speculate on it how we may,” said the late Dr Dale, “the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in the New Testament as the everlasting reason of every

¹ Eph. i. 13, 14.

² Rom. viii. 23.

³ Phil. iii. 20, 21.

happy relation between sinful man and the moral government of God.

“The conscience bows before the Cross and is at peace, even when the intellect is baffled and defeated in the attempt to construct a theory of the Atonement. ‘When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,’ is the answer to the deepest and most agonising distress of the heart ; and the theology which ignores and evades this truth can claim neither to be in harmony with the faith of the Apostles nor to interpret the grandest and most awful facts of the spiritual universe.”¹

¹ R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 230.

IV

JUSTIFICATION

REV. DR DYSON HAGUE

THE rediscovery of the meaning of Justification by Faith was the soul of the Reformation. It was its inspiration ; its life ; its victory. It came to the individual reformer as a revelation ; to the Church as a revolution. But its starting-point was opened eyes and regenerated hearts. It began as good tidings of great joy to each. To Latimer as to Luther the glorious fact that he, a poor sinner, was accepted and justified by simply receiving God's grace as a free gift by faith came as an almost incredible surprise. It swept over his soul as the sunrise, bringing peace and joy. And from the men who knew its power it passed over England and over Germany, and flashed on the religious world of Europe as an epoch-marking, epoch-making dynamic. It was not merely the power of God unto their salvation ; it was the power of God to the salvation of the Churches.

Recall for a moment the historic situation. Remember that for centuries the ideas of one's acceptance with God centred in and around the power of the priesthood and their guarantees of righting the soul with God. " It was the universal conception of mediæval piety that the mediation

of a priest was essential to salvation. Mediæval Christians believed with more or less distinctness that the supernatural life of the soul was created, nourished, and perfected through the Sacraments, and that the priests administering them possessed, in virtue of their ordination, miraculous powers. . . . It was this universally accepted power of a mediatorial priesthood which had enslaved Europe. . . . Everywhere the priesthood barred, or was supposed to bar, the way to God. . . . When man or woman felt sorrow for sin they were instructed to go, not to God, but to a man, often of immoral life, and confess their sins to him because he was a priest. When they wished to hear the comforting words of pardon spoken, it was not from God but from a priest that the assurance was supposed to come. God's grace was given only through a series of Sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Eucharist, Extreme Unction—and these ceremonies were not the signs and promises of the free grace of God, they were jealously guarded doors out of which, grudgingly, the priest dispensed the free grace of God." "The justification of which the mediæval Christian had experience was the descending of an upward stream of forces upon him from the supersensible world, through the Incarnation in the channels of ecclesiastical institutions, priestly consecration, sacraments, confession, and good works; it was something which came from his connection with a supersensible organisation which surrounded him" (Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, i. 438-448). Or, as Bishop Browne summarised it, "it was the general belief that man

could merit God's favour by good deeds of his own, and that works of mercy, charity, and self-denial, procured (through the intercession of Christ or perhaps of the Virgin Mary) pardon for sin and acceptance with God" (*Art.*, p. 282).

In fact the whole thing, the whole system, was an idea of religion which was the absolute counterfeit of that of St Paul. For the Justification by Faith which Paul first realised and then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, described, was the experience of a man who by nature and by life, by merit or deservings, has no right to the grace of God, but is given it by grace, and appropriates it by faith. As a matter of actual Christian life, the experiences of Latimer and Luther were identical with those of St Paul. Each of them—the one in Judaism, the other in Anglican Romanism, and the third in German Romanism—endeavoured with all the powers of a strong religious nature, by the use of the complicated means of the ecclesiastical system in which he was nurtured, to make himself worthy of, and fit for, the favour of God. Each of them went through long and strenuous soul experiences in the endeavour to build up by his own deeds and merits a superstructure high enough and strong enough to qualify himself for salvation. The record of Paul's experiences in Philippians iii. 4-9 is almost identical, circumstances excepted, with that of Latimer, whose weary way of vigil, fast and pilgrimage, and the purchase of pardons and indulgences, terminated in that glorious moment when the sin burden fell from him through the absolution by the ministry of

God's Holy Word, "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow." It was identical also with that of Luther. During that supreme hour in Luther's life, so wonderfully described by D'Aubigné (*Hist. Reform.*, ii. 54), matters of doctrine and difficulties of dogma were entirely absent. It was a spiritual crisis. It was a struggle of the soul. The sin burden lay upon him like a load. The consciousness of his guilt and the just judgment of God increasingly vexed his soul. In vain he sought peace in masses and penances, and paid the price of the purchase of sin's remission. "My conscience was filled with trouble and torment." And then came the word of the Lord to his astonished soul, light-bringing, life-giving: "The just shall live by faith." It came to him as a flashlight. "When by the Spirit of God I understood these words—I entered by an opened door into the very paradise of God. From that hour I saw the precious and holy Scriptures with new eyes." It was not a mere believing about God, still less a *frigida opinio*. It was a personal faith in God the Saviour, a faith that threw itself upon God. It was absolutely different from the faith which was a mere assent to doctrine, or that faith which has no effect in the practical and spiritual life, such as the faith of the formalist in James' day (James ii. 14-19), or of the Moslem of this age. It was real, vital, dynamic, Divine; the *fides viva* of the Church of England (Art. XII.). The justification by faith, then, which is the cardinal doctrine of the Church of England to-day (Art. XI.) did not originate merely as a dogma, or as a Protestant or Anglican doctrine, as

opposed to the Roman Catholic or mediæval dogma of Justification by Works. It was primarily a personal spiritual experience defying the exactitude of definition. "The Reformation started from this personal experience of the believing Christian which it declared to be the one elemental fact in Christianity which could never be proved by argument and could never be dissolved away by speculation. It proclaimed the universally neglected truth of mediæval theology, that in order to know God man must be in living touch with God Himself. The great reformers never attempted to prove this truth by argument; it was something self-evident, seen and known, when experienced" (Lindsay, i. 432).

We repeat, then, that the starting-point of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith, which was the life and glory and vitalising power of the revived and *re*-formed Anglican Church, was the personal experience of the men who afterwards formulated it as a doctrine. It came to them with marvellous freshness and gripped them with its tremendous power. This was certainly true of Wycliffe. It was certainly true of Latimer and Ridley, and undoubtedly also of Cranmer. (See his great confession, the secret and key of the Anglican Reformation. *Works*, Park. Soc., i. 374.) They knew that they were accepted and forgiven. They knew that, being justified by faith, they had peace with God. And this transformed their whole conception of religion. The formulated doctrine followed. They realised that the foundation of all true religion was acceptance with God, and that

there must be, as one has pointed out, an accepted worshipper before there can be an acceptable worship. They knew in their own personal experience that religion with multitudes was merely a means of averting God's displeasure and securing His favour. But when their eyes were opened by the revealing Light of the Spirit they saw with wonderment that whereas men's religion terminates in forgiveness, and the hope that forgiveness may be obtained before death, God's true religion begins with it. They came to see that all false religions, especially Romanism, consist of earnest efforts to secure, by meritorious offerings or by character development, the Divine favour in this life and eternal life in the world to come. Justification to the schoolman of mediævalism was a process of gradual development, through infused grace and penitential satisfaction—our own works and deservings—an interminable and ever unsatisfactory process. But with opened eyes they came to see that God's true religion begins with acceptance and obtained forgiveness, and learned, as Luther learned (Carlyle, *Heroes*, p. 120), that a man was not saved by singing masses, but by the infinite grace of God; a more credible hypothesis. And from that starting-point of personal conviction they passed through the calm and happy consciousness of acceptance with God to the life of sacrifice and service and growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was because of this that these men printed in the forefront of the Church Service of the Church of England the indispensable prerequisites of all

acceptable worship, the means of obtained forgiveness through God's offered absolution and that happy sense of sonship and acceptance which enables them to say "Our Father." It was because of this they drew up in the strictly technical language of formulated theology, as the teaching of the Church of England, the doctrine of justification by faith only as the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*.

For at the back of all treatment of this subject there lie two great unchanging verities :

1. The Nature of God.
2. The Nature of Man.

First, God. God is. Not God as the Great Hypothesis, but God as the Great Hypostasis, the underlying Subsistence of all. Not God as excogitated by the reason of man, but the Lord God Almighty as revealed in His Word. The Bible declares that God is Creator; God is holy; God is righteous; God is our Father; and God is Love. But as our Father, loving and just, God is the law-giver, and can in consistency with His glorious holiness and inflexible justice by no means clear the guilty. The Bible reveals God as the Sovereign Lord who has the right to set forth the terms on which He will receive man into His presence and favour, and the right to declare the terms upon which man is to be received. That surely needs no elaborate discussion for a Bible believer.

Man, in his relation to God, is a sinner. He is under sin. He has come short of the Glory of God. He is under the law. He is guilty. This is axiomatic. We take it for granted also that no one who believes

in the Bible and accepts the Bible will attempt to palliate or deny this. Sin is never revealed in the Scriptures as mere weakness ; much less as a mistake. It is demerit ; it is guilt ; it is transgression of the law. It is disobedience, positive and wilful ; it is disobedience to God, the rebellion of a faithless and covenant-defying son ; it is egotism, the displacement of God's will by resistance to the Divine Word. Its essence is marvellously summarised in Isa. liii. 6, " All we like sheep have GONE ASTRAY ; we have turned every one to his own way," and re-echoed in the Church of England, " We have erred and strayed from THY ways like LOST sheep." And more : it renders the sinner personally liable to punishment ; that is, sin is culpable. The culpability of sin is founded primarily in God's own essence (for a God whose attitude towards sin is absolutely apathetic must be a lifeless, unholy God, whom we could just as little honour as love), and necessarily also in the nature of man as a rational, moral, and consequently responsible being. (See Van Osterzee, *Dogmatics*, ii. 389-439, for a fine treatment of this whole subject.) Or, as Bishop Handley Moule puts it : " Sin is a fact, a fact in our own inmost personality, and wherever it is, it is condemnable and the All-holy God HATES it with infinite repulsion, and an absolute personal aversion " (*Outlines*, pp. 169-176).

The primary need of man, therefore, every man, any man, in this modern world as in any age, is the righting of relationship with God. Or to put it in a theological phrasing, the obtaining of a righteousness which would make one accepted with God, or

“accounted righteous before God.” The first necessity of life, the *summum bonum* of man (we speak in the language of Paul, and accept his treatment of this subject in Rom. iii.-v. and Gal. iii. as final and incontrovertible), is righteousness; that is, reconciliation with God; or judicial acceptance, which is the essence of justification. Man’s acceptance with God is to be obtained through righteousness and righteousness alone. That man cannot obtain or present this either by the development of his own character, or the accumulation of his own merits or deservings, is self-evident. For he is fallen. He is under condemnation. Sin separates him from God, and precludes the possibility of his return. The very works that he performs (while still under sin, under the law) constitute no claim to Divine favour (Art. X.). The law, as St Paul argued, was not a way of salvation, but a demonstration of the need of salvation in some other way or by some other way. It conferred no qualifying power. (“For as many as are of the works of the law are under curse . . . that no sinner is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident.”—Gal. iii. 10-11.) That is, to put it in modern language, no man by doing good or being good, or observing as best he can the canons of morality, or by what is popularly called “character-building,” can bring himself up to the Divine standard. As far as acceptance is concerned, or qualifying righteousness, the most ardent religionist is just as disqualified as the man in the penitentiary. Of course this is a hard saying. Who can bear it? To the average man of the modern

mind it is curiously offensive ; sclerotic (the Greek in John vi. 60), repulsive to instinct and reason.

But, to faith's vision, it is a glorious revelation. It is the very climax, the very apex of the glory of the Gospel. For in putting man down and driving man back and burning up, as it were, the last shreds of self-righteousness and consuming the last vestiges of human effort, it turns man from the mistake of his life, a mistake not for time but for eternity, of endeavouring to restore himself to God by his own effort. It swings him round to see that righteousness or justification are to be found apart altogether from man's works and man's efforts, immediately, absolutely, in complete fullness, by the acceptance of a righteousness that God confers as a free gift. The amazing truth both of the Romans and of the Galatians is that everything that was bound up in the meaning of the favour of God and the *summum bonum* of man's existence is offered as a free, present gift to the heart that believes ; and that, not on account of anything he has done or is doing or can do is this blessedness conferred, but on account of what Christ did ; and that it is obtained not by any acts or deeds of intrinsic meritoriousness, but by simply accepting it from God as a charisma (Rom. vi. 23), a dorema (Rom. v. 16), a gratuitously bestowed gift, freely accepted by the undeserving (Eph. ii. 8-9 ; Phil. iii. 4-9). (See Stalker's *St Paul*, pp. 30-64, for a very fine delineation of this.)

Perhaps its chief glory is its catholicity. It has nothing whatever to do with racial, traditional, or ecclesiastical privilege. There is no difference.

Every soul in the world is equalised. No one has any more right to this Great Gift of God than anyone else. The ancient Hebrew or the modern Churchman is in no position of favouritism. He is, by nature, just as far removed from God's righteousness and the right to justification as anyone else. He is not in a position to do anything more in the way of qualification than the most degraded or ignorant of the heathen. If righteousness or God's justification is by the law or the works of the law, or by character and the development of character, or by goodness and the exhibition of goodness, then we conclude that a very large part of mankind has very small chance of justification or salvation. But the amazing thing is that the thing which puts this glorious act of justification within the reach of any human being is the simple act of faith. This is the great revelation: that a man—that is, any man, or anyone—is justified fully by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus by faith only. This is the fact that excludes all boasting. It shuts out absolutely all priority of claim on the part of anybody, and establishes the triumphant conclusion that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom. iii. 28). In other words, when one comes to the acknowledgment that he is unworthy of life, that he has failed by his life to obtain it, and never can obtain it, and that he can and must get it only by accepting it as a free gift from God by faith only, then he obtains the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. He realises then that it is all right. He is

right with God. He has entered into that happy state of joy and peace in believing. He has peace with God. He has access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. In the hope of the glory of God he is a rejoicing man. He is not ashamed. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. (Study the succession or progression of the "Therefore's" in Rom. iii. 20-28 ; iv. 16-22 ; v. 1-5-18 ; culminating in Rom. viii. 1.)

Now it is obvious that this is the teaching of the Church of England in the XIth Article. We think we are safe in stating that no man or committee of men could ever have drawn up the XIth Article of the Church of England without passing through a state of spiritual experience identical with that of St Paul, or at any rate individually realising its spiritual import. It is so evidently the language of minds that had been ushered into the secret of the mystery of the Gospel. It was the condensation in a few lines of the Eureka of the soul's discovery, and of the inner glory of the gospel of grace : that the man who accepts Christ by a living personal faith is forgiven, yea, more than forgiven ; he is lifted up by God Himself into a position of favour and peace. Call it what you like—acceptance, remission, justification or pardon—it is evident that the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ flashed like light into the heart of those men who, like their fathers for centuries before them, had been cribbed, cabined and confined in a false conception of God and a false conception of His favour, imagining that in an endless

treadmill of legal and ecclesiastical requirements was the only possibility of liberty or hope for time and for eternity. This discovery of the glory of the Gospel in all its simplicity and power was translated by them into the concrete of the teaching of the Article, which they formulated to be the herald of this great and wonderful discovery of the simple way of salvation to the children of the Church of England for all ages. "I have often wished," wrote Cranmer to Calvin (*frater in Christo carissimus*), when the first draft of our Article was being drawn up, "that learned and godly men might meet together and *hand down to posterity* some work not only upon the subjects themselves, but upon the forms of expressing them. Our adversaries are now holding their councils at Trent for the establishment of their errors; and shall we neglect to call together a godly Synod, for the refutation of error, and for restoring and propagating the truth—*dogmata repurgare et propagare*" (*Lett.*, Park. Soc., p. 432).

Now there is a curious thing about this XIth Article of the Church of England. In its original form in 1552-1553, unlike all the other Articles, it did not state the doctrine of the Justification of man in concrete theological form at all. This was its title and subject, but instead of dogmatically propounding it, simply referred the Churchmen to the fuller statement of the Homily, and apparently desired the treatment of the whole subject there to be taken as the official doctrinal standard of the Church. This is how it read :

“Of the Justification of Manne

“Justification by onely faith in Jesus Christ in that sence, as it is declared in the homilie of Justification, is a moste certeine and holesome doctrine for Christian menne.”

That was all. Another curious thing is that Cranmer evidently took it for granted that every Churchman knew that The Homily of Justification referred to meant the third of *The First Book of Homilies*, which was entitled “A Sermon of the Salvation of Mankind by Only Christ our Saviour from sin and death everlasting.” What this Homily taught, and how it taught it, is of keen interest, therefore, to all Churchmen ; for the point of the Article lies in the words “in that sence.” The Homily consists of three parts, thirteen pages in all, and about five thousand words. The language is the quaint and impressive language of the Reformation age with its be’s and eth’s and ye’s, and fore-said and on this wise, and its forcible and antique adjectives. But the thing that strikes one throughout is the marvellous way in which it reproduces the very core and essence of the New Testament doctrine. It catches the very spirit of the Pauline evangel. Its opening sentence is a sort of introductory summary : “Because all men be sinners and offenders against God, and breakers of his law and commandments, therefore can no man by his own acts, works, and deeds, seem they never so good, be justified and made righteous before God ; but every man of necessity is constrained to seek for another righteousness or justification, to be

received at God's own hands, that is to say, the remission, pardon, and forgiveness of his sins and trespasses in such things as he hath offended. And this justification or righteousness, which we so receive by God's mercy and Christ's merits, embraced by faith, is taken, accepted, and allowed of God for our perfect and full justification."

It then goes on to quote Romans iii. 21-23, Romans x. 4, and Romans viii. 3, and states that in these verses we have the three things which go together in our justification: (1) God's mercy and grace; (2) Christ's justice or satisfaction (the price paid); (3) the believer's true and living faith. And it adds an explicit note of explanation that this faith is itself the gift of God; not that it shuts out repentance, hope, love, dread and the fear of God, but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. (Compare with this Hooker's daring words: "Salvation ONLY by Christ is the true foundation whereupon indeed Christianity standeth" to "faith is the ONLY hand which putteth on Christ unto Justification, and Christ the ONLY garment." —*Works*, i. 637-739.)

Again and again it reiterates the two great categories: Christ's merit ONLY; by faith ONLY. Again and again, by quotations from the Romans and the Galatians, and Philippians, and the Fathers, it demonstrates that "this saying, that we be justified by faith only, freely, and without works, is spoken for to take away clearly all merit of our works, as being unable to deserve our justification at God's hands. . . ." "This faith the holy Scripture teacheth: this is the strong rock and

foundation of Christian religion ; this doctrine all old and ancient authors of Christ's Church do approve : this doctrine advanceth and setteth forth the true glory of Christ, and *beateth down the vain glory of man* [think that out—splendid words !] : this whosoever denieth is not to be counted for a true Christian man, not for a setter forth of Christ's glory." And that there may be no mistake that Christ and Christ alone may have all the glory, it goes on to state that the true understanding of this doctrine, that we are justified by faith without works or in Christ only, is " not that this our own act to believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us and deserve our justification unto us ; for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves. But the true understanding and meaning thereof is, that, although we hear God's Word and believe it, although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread, and fear of God within us, and do never so many good works thereunto, yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues of faith, hope, charity, and all our other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak and insufficient and unperfect to deserve remission of our sins and our justification ; and therefore we must trust only in God's mercy."

Then, in the third section, it rings the changes once more on the word " only " : " We be justified by Christ ONLY—by the merits of our Saviour Christ ONLY—Christ Himself ONLY being the cause

meritorious thereof—ONLY faith justifieth us—through the ONLY merits and deservings of our Saviour Christ ” (*Homilies and Canons*, S.P.C.K., pp. 20-30).

Our XIth Article, therefore, as it stands to-day, is simply a dogmatic consolidation of the teaching of the Homily. It is a remarkable epitome of the very faith and heart of its essentials. It has grasped the things in it that really matter, and compressed into a sentence or two the substance of the New Testament doctrine. Those two “ only’s ” will ever stand as the two pillars of Church Doctrine and Bible Truth : Christ’s merit ONLY ; by faith ONLY.

With that sublime indifference to the teaching of a thousand years which was one of the outstanding evidences of the evangelical originality of our reformers, the Church went right back through and passed the long-taught falsities of mediævalism to the true, primitive teaching of the New Testament. The scholastic theologians of Rome in the Middle Ages, forgetting the warning of St Paul (Col. ii. 8), “ lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ,” made the great mistake of some theologians to-day. They tried to construct a system of theology that would combine what they supposed to be the Church’s teaching with the conclusions of human reason as developed in the highest theological philosophy. That is, they endeavoured to so modify and reconstruct the Christian doctrine that it would fit in with and satisfy the philosophic and scientific forms of the

then modern thought. They built up that extraordinary theory of justification which, while primarily and finally attributed to the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, nevertheless brought in, in practice, that qualifying and destructive theory of merit *de congruo* and *de condigno*—that is, that some works deserved grace of congruity, and others as a matter of actual worthiness, as if they deserved to be rewarded, or God was bound to reward them. This, said outspoken Luther, “is the divinity of the kingdom of Antichrist.” This doctrine of what was generally called work-righteousness was the dead fly that caused the ointment of mediæval theology to send forth a stinking flavour, and led to the Tridentine statement of the Romish doctrine of Justification, that while God’s glory is the final cause, and Christ’s grace the meritorious cause, inherent righteousness the formal cause, baptism, the sacrament of faith, with its infusion of grace, is the instrumental cause, and the first justification, in virtue of which good works can be performed which are meritorious, and as “works and deservings” (Art. XI.) give title to eternal life. That was called the second justification. Against this falsifying of truth, Hooker, as a champion of the Church of England, protested with all his might. He tears into shreds the idea of there being a first and second justification, sacramental and subsequent, inherent and meritorious. He calls it the mystery of the man of sin. “This maze the Church of Rome doth cause her followers to tread, when they ask her the way of justification.” He declares: “I cannot stand

now to unrip this building, and to sift it piece by piece ; only I will set a frame of apostolical erection by it." And then quoting Phil. iii. 8-9, he says that whether Rome speaks of a first or a second justification, its essence is a Divine quality inherent, a righteousness which is IN us, and if it be IN us, then it is OURS. But the righteousness wherein we must be justified is NOT OUR OWN. We cannot be justified by any inherent quality, for although in ourselves we are altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet being found in Christ through faith we are accepted in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous, yes, more perfectly righteous than one who had fulfilled the whole law. And then he concludes with words that may well seem startling to this generation : " I must take heed what I say : but the Apostle saith (2 Cor. v. 21) God made **Him** which knew no sin to be sin for us ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God Himself. Let it be accounted folly, or phrensy, or fury, or whatsoever ! " (I must put an exclamation mark after that whatsoever—the inferential allusion is so suggestive.) " It is our wisdom, and our comfort ; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered ; that God hath made Himself the sin of men, and that men are made the righteousness of God " (Hooker's *Works*, i. 603-606).

And so that great Church theologian declared how the Church has reaffirmed the great teaching of St Paul, and of the New Testament, and of the

truth of Christ, and how in the XIth Article she has reasserted for all time the great doctrine of justification by faith. That is, that by God's grace, on account of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, through a personal act of living faith, the soul passes from death unto life, from being under God's condemnation to God's benediction, restored to God's favour on account of the imputed righteousness of Christ as being righteous, or righteousness itself in the sight of God. For, in a nutshell, this is the Church's teaching of justification by faith. It is an act, not a process. It is an act of grace to the condemnation-deserving. It is a judicial or a forensic act—that is, the act of a judge as opposed to the executive act of a sovereign. It is a declarative act by which the sinner is pronounced righteous, or accounted righteous—that is, declared free from the sentence of guilt ; not an efficient act making him subjectively righteous by the infusing of holiness. It is not pardon ; it is more than mere pardon, as a criminal may be pardoned by sovereign executive, “ and yet not be fully restored to his status among men.” It is not the infusion of righteousness, or sacramental justification and sanctification in regard to which, as Hooker shows, we differ so absolutely from the Church of Rome (*Works*, i. 603-604). It is that act called by St Paul the imputing of righteousness ; that act by which God solely on account of the righteousness of Christ, that is all that Christ was and did, His Incarnation, all He suffered, His crucifixion and precious blood-shedding, which at once satisfied the demands of Divine Justice and

merited for all believers the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life, imputes or lays to our charge or reckons to us a righteousness which is not ours inherently or meritoriously, but is the righteousness of Christ, accepted for us and reckoned as ours. (Read Romans iv., especially verses 3, 4, 5, 16, 23, 24; Gal. iii. 6-14, and Phil. iii. 4-9.) So the sinner, helpless and hopeless as a condemned man, with no righteousness, no power, hears the glad news that God in Christ has done for him what he could not do, and confers upon him by grace the life gift which is at once his justification, his reconciliation, his redemption, his restoration, his peace with God, his power to live in newness of life, "for the just shall live by faith." As the Church teaches, by faith ONLY, a most wholesome doctrine (tending to the salubrity of the whole man, body, soul and spirit), and very full of comfort. Faith, as the Church Homily teaches, is just the act of sight, looking away from self to the Lamb of God, to Christ ONLY. "Faith," wrote Hooker, "is only the hand which putteth on Christ unto justification"; that is, faith holds out its empty palm, and takes with self-evacuating gratitude the robe of Christ's righteousness, and puts it on to cover our shame, and make us blameless in the sight of God. But St Paul never taught that we are justified on account of faith. Never. We are justified by or through faith. Faith is simply and only an act of trust. It is merely an act of receiving, an act of resting on or coming to, or laying hold of. As there is no merit in the beggar's hand, or in his act of receiving God's freely offered gift of life,

so there is no meritorious worth in the act of faith by which we receive Christ. It is of faith that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure. (The reader is referred to two treatises that made a very deep impression on the writer years ago: *Brief Thoughts on the Gospel*, and *God's Way of Peace*, by Bonar, the prefaces to each of which are singularly scholarly and powerful.)

Of course, in many quarters to-day, all this smacks of the discarded and the obsolete. Its terms are irritating and obnoxious to the modern mind. It seems to be so amusingly out of date. But it's the only Gospel for this century. It's the Gospel of Paul and the Church of England; glorious, dynamical, more indispensable than ever. Never perhaps was there an age which so much needed the truth that men are by nature fallen, the children of disobedience, and dead in trespasses and sins. Culture, civilisation, scholarship, decency of habits, correctness of manners, advancement in science, these are but the outward habiliments of life. The man's the man for a' that. Underneath the practical Pelagianism of the age, and its frank denials of the actuality of original sin and the intrinsic guiltiness of sinful man, there lies the unchanging and unchangeable fact of man as he really is before God; just poor and needy, just guilty and condemned. There's no health in him, no matter who he is; no matter how learned, no matter how religious. It's curious to note how two of the most scholarly minds have frankly stated this. S. T. Coleridge, with his deeply philosophic

mind, says that the doctrine of original sin concerns all men as A FACT rather than a doctrine, and Christians in particular as a doctrine which is the antecedent and ground of redemption (*Aids to Reflection*, 188-195; *Literary Remains, Omniana*, 322). His final confession in the *Omniana* (p. 392) is most revealing: "I believe, and hold it, as the fundamental Article of Christianity, that I am a fallen creature. . . . This fearful mystery I pretend not to understand. I cannot even conceive the possibility of it—but I know that it is so." Even so modern a critic as Mr Augustine Birrell declared that "the one doctrine of religion he had never any difficulty in believing was the doctrine of original sin." That is, a human nature is depraved. Sin has invaded human nature in its totality; the fall of human nature is complete. Words like these, however antagonistic to the so-called new theology, ring curiously true to the words of Romans iii. 9-10, 19-23, and to the teaching of the IXth Article of the Church of England. Naturally the modern philosophic mind prefers to voice itself in a creed something like this: "We believe that there is none under sin; there is none unrighteous, no not one. Whatsoever the law saith it saith to the flagrant transgressor of the law, the inmates of the penitentiary. As for the respectable and religious, they are not guilty, nor have they come short of the glory of God." As to the guilt of sin, it denies its very concept. It unhesitatingly contradicts the teaching of the Church in the IXth Article: that this birth sin is the nature of every man, and that in every

person it deserves God's condemnation. But to those who sympathetically and earnestly study the great need and tragedy of modern life it is a very small thing what science and philosophy say about this matter. There is nothing, either in the Bible or in the history of Christian experience, to warrant the assumption that religion ought to make terms with philosophy or that the making of such terms would conciliate the philosophic. Our Lord and St Paul teach the very opposite in Luke x. 21-22 ; 1 Cor. i. 18-31 ; ii. 4-14 ; and Col. ii. 8-10. For after all, the new psychology and the latest evolutionary science and the last edition of criticism have nothing to say about these things that carries any authority to the soul of man. There's only one Voice. There's only one final Court of Appeal. What saith the Lord? What saith the Word?

Suppose some very popular professor or prominent preacher were to say with regard to Article IX. or Article X. that nobody believes it or even thinks he believes it. Surely that doesn't alter its truth in the slightest degree. God's truth is not less truth because some doctrinaire has questioned it, or a doctrine less authentic because somebody or other has floated an unverifiable hypothesis. Sir Oliver Lodge may imagine that he is voicing the sentiments of the higher man to-day when he states that he never worries about his sins at all, still less about their punishment, and openly denies the existence of original sin. But St John says : " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we

say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Mr Bernard Shaw says that popular Christianity has for its chief sensation a sanguinary execution, and for its central mystery an insane vengeance, bought off by a trumpery expiation. But it doesn't matter in the slightest degree what he says, or what Mr Wells says either. Suppose Sir Conan Doyle suggests that no man can see any justice in a vicarious sacrifice or understand such expressions as the redemption from sin, cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb, and now that it has become certain that man had never fallen, what has become of the Atonement? What does it matter what rationalism in the individual or in the mass says with regard to all these things, or when it claims that the God of the Bible is the God of traditional theosophy only, and that the only God of to-day is the god of current Pantheism, the idea of a Redeemer or a ransom being philosophically absurd?

Let no one be shaken in mind or troubled by little things like this, or big people like these. Let no one be swayed by the sneer that we think in terms of a past generation, and should evolve a new message for the new problems of the day. Beside and around an extremely limited circle of pride and self-satisfaction there surges a great ocean, a thousand million of the sinful, struggling, weary, despondent and sin-sick sons of men; some conscious of the sin weight, some haunted with the guilt fear, some struggling with the sin force, some tormented with the sin pain—but all, whether conscious or unconscious of it, just because they

are poor humans, dissatisfied, desiring Him who said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," and wanting that truth that meets all reason, satisfies every conscience, and gladdens every heart; that the Son of God in His Body bore our sins on the Tree, and that by looking to Him, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, the soul emerges into light, and life, and liberty, and love, with a sense of relief and satisfaction, heart-easing, and very full of comfort.

Long before the twentieth century, with its science and art and culture, arose, men received this glorious Gospel with a light and peace that filled their hearts. To-day it's the only message that can bring a converting and regenerating dynamic (Rom. i. 16-17); the only Gospel that can fill the everlasting vacuum in the soul of man. The one thing supremely needed to-day by the Episcopate, the professorate, the pastorate of England's Church is a realised experience of Christ's saving grace, and an intrepid proclamation of it to all, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It is this that revived the Church of England in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It is this alone that can revive the Church and the nation in the twentieth. The Gospel always will be news; a new thing when revealed in the Holy Spirit. And it will always be glad news to those who have ears to hear its marvellous import. As Lord Tennyson is reported to have said, with great reverence, to the old woman who said that the only news she had heard was that Jesus Christ came into

the world to save sinners: "It's old news, and it's new news; it's good news, and it's true news." And to all, scholarly or unscholarly, yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, it was, and is, and ever will be the glorious Gospel: Christ absolutely necessary; Christ exclusively sufficient; Christ instantaneously accessible; Christ perennially satisfying. To stand by this glorious Gospel unashamedly is the duty of the day. A devitalised Gospel, an attenuated Gospel, will conceive no vital programme; can inspire no world effort. It never produced a martyr or inspired a reformer; and it never will. The only message that will unify all churches and churchmen on an asaleutic foundation (Heb. xii. 28 in the Greek), and inaugurate an awakening in the world, and a world-wide revival in the Church, is that Word which is ever old and ever new in Him and His (John ii. 7-8). To declare it triumphantly is the duty of the hour. *Repurgare et propagare*, as Cranmer put it when he said that nothing tends more effectually to unite the Churches of God and more powerfully to defend the fold of Christ than the pure teaching of the Gospel—*repurgare*, to restore in all its purity; *propagare*, to spread it from soul to soul and land to land. Preach the great Gospel of Justification by Faith ONLY to every creature—that is, go tell every soul without exception, the scholar in his study, the toiler with his care, the king on his throne, the outcast in the slum, the sage of the East, or the slave in darkest Africa, whatever the record of the past, whatever the burden of the present—that if he will but turn to Christ with living faith, Christ will

accept him, his sins shall be forgiven him, and being justified by faith he will have peace with God, and power to live joyously and victoriously to the end. Of such a Gospel what Christian could ever be ashamed !

V

SANCTIFICATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY THE EDITOR

BOTH for the evolutionist and for the special creationist the production of personalities is the goal and crown of the whole world process. Man has come to recognise that personality, individuality, call it by what name you like, is the most characteristic and valuable of the differentia which mark men off from the brutes. Such a claim, with all that it connotes as to thought, feeling and volition, would, I suppose, be not only admitted but made by the most materialistic thinker of the day. And for the Christian this proposition carries with it the corollary that personality, like every other perfection, must exist in God also. And essentially both the fear of the Lord in the Old Testament and faith in the New Testament means the recognition of God as a Person. The discussion of the relationship between the personality and the infinity of God does not properly belong to the subject of this present chapter. All we are just now concerned to know is, what does the Bible teach as to this attribute with regard to the Holy Spirit?

Now the so-called anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament are nothing more than an attempt to reveal in human language the essential personalness

of God. Such anthropomorphic language, ascribing the thoughts, feelings and acts of a man to God Himself, is mostly used in the Old Testament in reference simply to God. And it is sometimes a little uncertain whether in the light of the New Testament any particular instance may be more naturally referred to the Person of the Father or of the Son. But the point for us to notice here is that just such language is also quite definitely used of the Holy Ghost.

Genesis has well been called the seed plot of the Bible. All the moral, theological and ceremonial terms of the Bible have their sense fixed in the Pentateuch, and mainly in Genesis itself. Thus it is in the present instance. In Genesis vi. 3 God says: "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Here we have a word which is strongly personal in its outlook. Such a usage as this prepares the way for those more tender and intimate ones in the New Testament where He is spoken of in ways which clearly demand nothing less than personality in the reference they make. Thus the Spirit is spoken of as being grieved (Eph. iv. 30), having fellowship with believers (2 Cor. xiii. 14), choosing what gifts to bestow on individual Christians (1 Cor. xii. 11), guiding, speaking to the Christian (John xvi. 13), testifying of Christ (John xv. 26), etc., etc. Whatever of personality we ascribe to the Father and to the Son, we must in the light of these passages ascribe to the Holy Spirit also.

Further His oneness with the other two Persons of the Blessed Trinity is such that the activities of the Godhead can frequently be ascribed to either

of the Three without the confusion which would ordinarily result in the case of human relationships.

Thus creation is ascribed to the Spirit (Gen. i. 2; Ps. civ. 30), while in Ps. xxxiii. 6 it is ascribed to the Son, and constantly to Jehovah where the reference may sometimes be either to the Father or the Son.

Similarly, God's omnipresence is predicated of the Spirit (Ps. cxxxix. 7). Particularly in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, He is another Comforter coming to take the place of Jesus in the experience of the disciples. Christians are in Christ (Rom. viii. 1); they are also in the Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 11). Christ intercedes for His people (Rom. viii. 34), so does the Spirit (Rom. viii. 26).

He is spoken of sometimes as being the Spirit of God where the Father is implied, and sometimes as the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9). This fact revealed about Him is technically called the double procession of the Holy Ghost. And this was one of the matters in dispute which split the Church into Eastern and Western. It may seem abstruse, and at first sight unimportant to our practical modern minds, but really it involves nothing less than the essential deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our thought about the Holy Ghost we need to remember and to avoid two contrasted errors. We are not to fall into tritheism by thinking of Him as a third God separate from two other Gods. Nor are we to lose sight of His essentially personal relationship in which we may share. But the opposite mistake into which so many Christians

fall, of thinking of the Holy Ghost merely as a kind of influence, is one which sooner or later strikes at the very root of all Christian character and living. Doctrine and life, theory and practice, are as usual inseparably bound up together. The man who does not know something of what it is to enter into personal relations with God the Holy Ghost is losing something which the Lord Jesus Christ meant him to have.

With this very brief summary of the teaching of the Bible concerning the Holy Spirit, we may turn to consider in the second place His work. And first HIS WORK in Creation.

I have already referred to one or two passages which speak of the Spirit's work in Creation. We may think of the relationship between the Spirit and the world as specially setting forth the immanence of God. One of the ultimate categories of thought is that of force. And it is to this thought the fact of the Holy Spirit corresponds. The brooding Spirit of Gen. i. 2 suggests the tides of Divine power let loose in the fashioning and development of the universe. The Divine inbreathing pictorially sets before us the most intimate relationship of God to His world. The breath of His power sustains all life. In Him we live and move and have our being. God is in every created being from the germ to the archangel. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). And this breath of the Almighty is the basis of all created life.

We turn next to consider the Bible teaching as to the Holy Ghost in reference to man. Here we

are in presence of a division of opinion amongst God's people. Some think that the Holy Spirit only operates upon the hearts of mankind generally through the Church of God or through individual Christians. This view is based on John xvi. 8, where the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples: "When he [the Comforter] is come to you, he will reprove the world," etc. The words "to you," as will be seen, are interpolated from the preceding verse: "I will send him unto you." This seems legitimate enough. Yet, while admitting most fully that mainly and normally it is through the Church that the Holy Spirit reaches the world, I cannot think that His influence is rigidly limited to that agency. We have already seen how in Gen. vi. 3 He is spoken of as striving even with ungodly men. And on more than one occasion in the Old Testament reference is made to the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of men who seem upon the most charitable judgment not to have been men of God at all. The ultimate personal relationship of Saul to his God must remain for the present in dispute. But I suppose that most of us would agree that Balaam was not a saved man. Yet God spoke to him.

In the New Testament it is the relationship of the Spirit to the Church that is chiefly in view when we get past the Gospels. And therefore naturally we have no very definite reference to any people outside the Church. But still in Rom. ii. 4 St Paul speaks about the goodness of God leading men to repentance. Here the context clearly shows that it is the impenitent about whom this is

said. But if that is so, I do not think we can fail to see that in some sense at least God is in contact even with the unsaved. In Him they live and move and have their being. The sinner cannot get away from God. And this is just what makes the sinner's position so serious. But if the sinner in the above sense is in relationship with God he must be in relationship with the Holy Spirit. Gen. vi. 3 and Rom. ii. 4 coalesce in meaning. The Spirit strives with the sinner to lead him to repentance. But the sinner persists in exercising his awful power of saying "No" to God, thus storing up for himself wrath against the day of wrath. I cannot therefore think that it is accurate to say that the Spirit of God only operates on the world through the Church. It is quite in accord with this that we find God spoken of as stirring up the spirit of the kings of Assyria (1 Chron. v. 26) and of Cyrus of Persia (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22) to take certain action, even when, as in the former case, such action was directed against the people of God. Thus our Book of Common Prayer has Scriptural authority for saying that we are taught by God's Holy Word that the hearts of kings are under His rule and governance.

The highest part of man is his spirit. His intellectual and moral faculties are those things in his wonderful make-up which are most nearly like God. And this spiritual part of man is the part through which most of all spiritual forces can touch him, whether of good or of evil. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7).

Accordingly regeneration is specifically referred

to as the act of the Holy Ghost (St John iii. 5). And no Christian will hesitate to recognise the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit in bringing about his conversion. At the time of our new birth we were mainly impressed with the fact of what we had to do. We were bidden to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. And all our attention was taken up with that. Yet after it was all over and we had time to sit down and think about it, another fact emerged previously overlooked. And what was that? It was not so much what we had done that was of primary importance, but what God had done. This fact can be enshrined in very harsh and even repellent forms of words, as in some extreme statements of the doctrine of election. But it is a fact nevertheless and one moreover which is designed to be of immense comfort and stabilising power to the Christian.

Thus conviction of sin and regeneration are alike the work of the Holy Spirit. But His operations with regard to man do not cease at this juncture. The life which has been given needs to be maintained. And we are as dependent upon God for the maintenance of our spiritual as we are of our physical lives. The Christian's progress is possible only because God is continually helping him. As our reformers put it in the Collect for Christmas Day, having been born again and made God's children by adoption and grace, we need the daily renewing of the Holy Spirit. The more devoted and consecrated a Christian man is, the more ready will he be to acknowledge that his hope is all in God. "All my fresh springs are in thee" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7).

But in addition to all this there is a further consideration of which we must not lose sight. As we look round upon any Church fellowship we are at once struck by the fact that there are great differences between Christians. Many of these differences are merely superficial. Some are more deep-seated and important. But as we study our fellow-Christians more closely and sympathetically we shall discover that the main difference resolves itself into whether they have had a personal experience of the meaning of Pentecost or not. There are rejoicing Christians and depressed Christians. There are strong Christians and weak. There are victorious Christians and defeated. There are Christians easy to get on with and others who are difficult. But the thing that conditions everything else is the individual relationship to, and experience of, the Holy Ghost.

And when we turn to the New Testament we find that this corresponds to the historical situation revealed there. Pentecost made all the difference to the Apostles and their friends. It makes all the difference to us still.

And the Church of England extends a practical recognition to the difference. For the ceremony of Confirmation expresses the purpose of the Church that all its members should press on to know the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in ever-increasing fullness. "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy Heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom." According to an old proverb, you can

drive a coach and four through an Act of Parliament. Experience shows us that a sinner can slip through all the meshes of any creed ever drawn up. And certainly a Christian may slip through a Confirmation service, and the even more fruitful and important time of preparation beforehand, without coming to his personal Pentecost. But, at any rate, there the ideal stands for every member of the Church of England. We have to inquire what its meaning may be.

To begin with, let us remind ourselves again that every believer has the Holy Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). He may therefore venture to say that the Apostles, even prior to Pentecost, had the Holy Ghost. Yet on the Easter night the Lord Jesus said to them and to their friends (St Luke xxiv. 33), "Receive the Holy Ghost," while five weeks later He reiterated the promise, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts i. 8).

Clearly then there is a progressive experience of God's indwelling in the believer's heart. Of this progress Pentecost was one well marked, but by no means the final, step. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 4). And the difference thus made was obvious, as it still is to the careful reader of the Acts.

There is then a difference between having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit; a difference between His first ingress to, and His complete possession of, the believer's heart. It falls to us to consider some of the ways in which such a difference

becomes practically manifest in the Christian's life. Perhaps the first thing is that the indwelling of the Spirit results in the production of the fruit of the Spirit. You have this summarised in the well-known passage in Gal. v. 22-23: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, humility, self-control." We must not stay for an examination of all that is implied in such a statement. But we may sum it all up in a single phrase: a Christ-like character. And the psychological reason for this is suggested by the Lord Jesus Himself. The Father shall give you another Comforter, He says, so that ye shall see me (St John xiv. 16 ff). As the context shows, this was to be no longer effected by the ordinary channels of sense-perception, but through the mind of the disciple. In other words, it is the function of the Holy Ghost to manifest Christ to the Christian. This is framed in even more emphatic words, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (St John xv. 26). Put quite simply, we may say that this means that the Holy Spirit makes the Christian aware of the presence of Christ. Moreover, He will guide us into all truth, and He shall glorify the Lord Jesus (St John xvi. 13-14). He gives the Christian a clear understanding of the truth about Christ, and makes Christ glorious in His servant's thought.

Thus the function of the indwelling Holy Ghost, and it is to be recalled that He is God Himself, is just to help us to be occupied with Christ. He does not cause us to be taken up with Himself,

nor with the way of His indwelling; still less with our own selves, our moods, our feelings, our experiences. He saves us from all morbid and power-destroying introspectiveness. By Him we are deflected from the subjective to the objective side of things.

And since we become like what we think about, such an operation makes us more and more like Jesus. It makes us sane, healthy men and women.

In the next place, the Spirit equips for service. "Ye shall receive power . . . ye shall be my witnesses" (Acts i. 8). And the more efficient a man is as a Christian worker, the more he realises his absolute dependence upon the power of the Spirit. "We speak," says St Paul, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know," says the beloved disciple (1 John ii. 20). So that both for the inner working of the mind, and for the outward expression through the lips, the Holy Spirit is for the Christian the dominant factor.

The result of all this in the life is covered by the Bible term "sanctification." And such a life is intended to be the norm for the Christian, who is accordingly referred to constantly as a saint. It is important to bear in mind that sainthood is not primarily an attainment, but a relationship. The Christian is a saint, not by virtue of his own struggles and achievements, but because God, in the person of His Spirit, has possession of him. It

was God's presence alone that made tabernacle or temple holy. It is God's presence alone which makes men and women holy to-day. Holiness does not consist in the wearing of a distinctive dress, nor in outward postures, nor in the use of a particular phraseology, but in the mind and body being in the unrestricted possession of God. From this arises, of course, the secondary meaning of the word. The tabernacle became instinct with God's presence. The Christian's character approximates more and more to the character of His Lord. That is holiness. Nothing else is.

It is to be noted further that such an experience is not the prerogative of a few, but the duty of all. The promise is unto " . . . as many as the Lord our God shall call " (Acts ii. 39). The Roman letter was written " to all . . . beloved of God, called to be saints " (Rom. i. 7). Such holiness is an indispensable prerequisite for seeing God ultimately face to face. " Follow . . . holiness without which no man shall see the Lord " (Heb. xii. 14). It is not an obligation out of which any of us is at liberty to contract himself. And with a vivid appreciation of the universality of the obligation the Church of England provides Confirmation as the normal opportunity of receiving instruction upon and entering into the blessing of these high privileges. We turn accordingly, in the last place, to ask how this experience may become our own.

Concerning the historical manifestation of Pentecost we read, " the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified " (St John

vii. 39). As Bishop Westcott has reminded us (*in loco*), the anarthous noun "spirit" marks the manifestation of the gift of the Spirit, and not the Spirit Himself as a Person. As a matter of historical fact, the Pentecostal manifestation of the Spirit was deferred until after the Ascension of Christ. Which thing is a parable. For in like manner the personal experience of Pentecost can never take place in a life until the Lord Jesus has been glorified by the self-surrender of that life to him. Logically, it seems as if we were thus shut up in a circle from which there can be no escape. We cannot have the Spirit's fullness until we glorify Jesus. We cannot glorify Jesus until we have the Spirit's fullness. The dilemma may be a real and anxious one for thought. In fact it presents no real difficulty.

No man can say, Lord, Jesus, in the full meaning of the phrase, but by the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 3). But you can say it this instant, if you will. For the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities (Rom. viii. 26). It is the old paradox of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. A hopeless dilemma for speculative thought. But one which never scares the preacher from saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). So may we hear and obey the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (St John xx. 22). We have heard them, many of us, before. Let us listen to them again, translating, however, this time, "take ye the Holy Ghost." It is the same word, but perhaps "take" to our practical Western minds savours

a little more of promptitude and definiteness than
“ receive.”

“ I take Thee, blessed Lord,
I give myself to Thee,
And Thou according to Thy word,
Dost undertake for me.”

Rev. A. B. SIMPSON.

NOTE

The special work of the Holy Ghost in inspiring the writers of the Bible forms the subject of a separate chapter, and therefore has not been referred to here.

VI

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

REV. G. T. MANLEY

BELIEF in a living God is essential to any form of Christianity. If once this fundamental postulate be granted it is impossible to deny the contention with which Paley opened his famous treatise, that it is not improbable that such a God should make a revelation of Himself to the human race which should assure them of His benevolence and guide them to the attainment of everlasting life.

The Bible professes to be such a revelation, and the evangelical doctrine of the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture is neither more nor less than this, that the claim which the Bible makes for itself is true.

In the present chapter this proposition will be expanded first in the light of the claim itself, then as construed in various periods of Church history, and finally as affecting present-day problems. In this last division the difficulties in the way of the claim raised by modern science and Biblical criticism will be considered.

The question, "What does the Bible claim for itself?" is not to be answered in a phrase. Of the books of the New Testament some make no explicit claim to be a revelation, though several

claim Divine authority for particular statements or commands. Yet in the New Testament the Old Testament is described as the "oracles of God," and constantly treated as the inspired Word of God; and "though it is only in 2 Timothy that inspiration is directly ascribed to the Old Testament Scriptures, there can be no doubt that belief in this inspiration was shared by all the leaders of the Apostolic Church, who quote the Old Testament as a final authority, or as the Word of God. The same attitude seems to be attributed to our Lord in more than one of His arguments with the Jews, and in the direct teaching of the Sermon on the Mount" (Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 330).

When we ask again, "Does the New Testament claim for itself the same Divine inspiration and authority which it ascribes to the Hebrew Scriptures?" a direct answer is impossible; but indirectly an affirmative answer is inevitable. The claim to inspiration for the New Testament is not to be based upon proof-texts, but upon the consciousness of the Apostles and evangelists that they are agents in a revelation of God through Jesus Christ, which is the crown and completion of the older revelation. God is speaking to the world by His Son, and the great salvation thus proclaimed, by the power of the Holy Ghost, stands surer and stronger than the former word (Heb. i. 2; ii. 2-4). Apostles and prophets are coupled together (Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xviii. 20; Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9), as also the "Word of God and the testimony of Jesus," in a manner which

manifests a consciousness that the inspiration of the New Testament writings is not inferior to that of the former Scriptures. And whatever opinion be held as to the authorship of 2 Peter, there is no mistaking the claims made in it for the Pauline epistles, and the Apostolic commandments (2 Peter iii. 15, 16), a claim which was accepted in Apostolic times.

In addition, it is impossible not to connect the promise of the Spirit in John xiv.-xvi. with the New Testament writings. "The traditional belief in the inspiration of the New Testament finds its justification in the promises of Divine assistance made by our Lord to the Apostles and their company, and the special gifts of the Spirit possessed by the Apostolic Age. If the first age was specially guided by the Spirit into a knowledge of essential truth, its writings have rightly been gathered by the Church into a sacred canon" (Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 389).

The difficulties as to the limits of the New Testament canon are not relevant to the broad question, which is, whether the book as we now have it justifies a claim for its inspiration and authority equal to that which it explicitly claims for the Old Testament; that it is a God-breathed writing, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, the sufficient equipment of the man of God. This broad question would remain the same whether or not one or two books were excluded from the canon. Yet we are faced with the fact, marvellous, if not supernatural, that soon after the

middle of the second century the Church had her New Testament, practically our New Testament, accepted as authoritative to the exclusion of other writings, and given by Jew and Gentile an equal authority with the time-honoured oracles of God of the old dispensation. Not only so, but Jesus of Nazareth was, by common consent in the Church, no longer the mere carpenter's son, but "the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." The more this phenomenon is studied by the humble believing soul the less can it be explained as a mere evolution of Church tradition, and the more certain it will become that behind the New Testament stands the Lord Jesus Christ as the true author, Who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. (See Knox, *On What Authority*, chaps. ii. and iii., for a full discussion of this subject.)

The Old Testament occupied a much larger place in the teaching of Christ than is sometimes recognised, and over a hundred more or less distinct references can be gathered. (See Knox, *On What Authority*, pp. 145-148.)

He spoke of the prophets as the messengers of God, and of the rejection of their message as the rejection of God. He plainly regards them as containing predictions concerning Himself, some of a minute character, and sees the providence of God working to bring about their necessary fulfilment. In His great prophetic discourse (Mark xiii.) He mingles His own predictions concerning the immediate and more distant future with theirs, making no distinction between the authority, which is assumed to be Divine.

He accepts the Mosaic law as a divine institution, both as to its greater precepts, and even down to the tithing of mint and rue, and every jot or tittle, binding even its minor precepts upon the consciences of His Jewish hearers. There is evidence to prove that He Himself kept it with perfect scrupulousness. He uses the same terms as to its permanence as He applies to His own words; He marks its dispensational or permissive character, but never questions its Divine origin and authority.

He expounds and expands it, but never apologises for it; He speaks without reserve of its teachings as the "commandments of God," and sharply contrasts them with the traditions of men. As to the history, He accepts it unquestioningly; He displays no horror at the acts attributed to Jehovah in its pages, and shows no trace of finding in it either contradiction or inconsistency. He quotes Divine judgments recorded against human sin and prophesies their repetition. He finds parallel and contrast between His own miracles and the miracles of the wilderness wanderings; and throughout He bases His teaching about God's dealings with men upon their recorded history. In a word, Christ regarded the Old Testament as true, its law as authoritative, and its prophecies as necessarily to be fulfilled.

His references to the "Scriptures," and His frequent use of the formula, "it is written," as well as His quotations and allusions, leave no doubt that it was the written Scriptures of the Old Testament to which He referred and that He regarded them as "the Word of God."

THE EARLY FATHERS AND THE REFORMERS

This view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture, as claimed in the pages of the Bible, and endorsed by our Lord, is sometimes referred to as the "traditional" view, and thus opposed to the "critical" or "modern" view. If the adjective traditional is employed only to describe the constancy with which this belief has been handed down from one generation of Christian scholars to another, it is unobjectionable; but it would be quite untrue to suggest that the claims of Scripture have been accepted by succeeding ages merely upon the authority of tradition without full examination and the most earnest questioning.

In Church history there have been certain critical and formative periods when the minds of men were alert and independent, and every belief subject to challenge and re-examination, followed by intervals of quiescence and traditional acceptance of established theories.

One such critical period is found in the first two centuries of the Christian era, and another in the days of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

The second century saw the rise of heretical doctrines which were clean contrary to the teaching of St John's gospel and the Pauline epistles, and in consequence the authority of these writings was early subjected to challenge. There ensued a time of critical discussion of their authority, which renders it the more striking that by the end of the second century these and all the main writings of

the New Testament had received from the Church in every part such an endorsement of their authority that from that time forward no doctrine had even a chance for consideration unless it could at least profess to prove itself by the New Testament Scriptures. Such doubts as remained concerning the canon centred round only a small fringe of disputed books, and the disputes were largely concerned with the question as to whether these books could claim apostolic authorship.

In the long intellectual process which issued in the formation of the canon of the New Testament the fundamental question was not the mode of inspiration, or the limits or nature of its authority, but the question of fact, whether these writings were, as a whole, to be regarded as "oracles of God," the true and authoritative message and revelation to mankind; and to this question the answer was a decided and unanimous affirmative. It is thus voiced by Clement of Alexandria: "We have received (the foundations of our faith) from God, through the Scriptures . . . and he that believeth on the Word knoweth that the thing is true, for the Word is Truth; and he that believeth not him that speaketh disbelieveth God . . . for he disbelieveth that which hath been spoken by the Holy Spirit for our salvation."

As to the *mode* of inspiration much was written which seems to justify the charge of a mechanical view of inspiration, particularly when the Holy Spirit is likened to a musician and the human author of Scripture to the instrument upon which he plays. But although the early Fathers certainly

attributed the ultimate origin, inspiration and authorship of the Scriptures to the Holy Spirit, they did not deny to the human authors a real and conscious co-operation, nor were they slow to recognise the human characteristics of the authors. Justin Martyr, a convert well versed in current philosophy, thus sums up the matter : " We must not suppose that the language proceeds from the men who are inspired, but from the Divine word which moves them. Their work is to announce that which the Holy Spirit descending upon them purposes through them to teach those who wish to learn true religion."

The preceding quotations will be found in an interesting compendium of the views of the ante-Nicene Fathers upon the inspiration of Holy Scripture in Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels* (pp. 423-430). It is impossible to read through this without realising how very real to them was the personal operation of the Holy Spirit ; and as this is realised there is forced upon the reader the conviction that it is only as the individual and the Church get back to the apostolic sense of the reality and present personality of the Holy Spirit that a true view of the inspiration of Scripture can be attained.

Professor Sanday thus summarises the properties ascribed to the New Testament (and *a fortiori* to the Old Testament) at the close of the second century (*Inspiration*, p. 20) :

" The New Testament is (1) a sacred book ; (2) on the same footing with Old Testament—a proposition questioned but true ; (3) inspired by

the Holy Spirit, or bearing the authority of Christ ; (4) this inspiration is even ' verbal ' and extends to facts as well as doctrines ; (5) it carries with it a sort of perfection, completeness, infallibility ; (6) the New Testament Scriptures are appealed to as (a) the rule of faith, (b) the rule of conduct ; (7) they are interpreted allegorically like a sacred book, and complaints are made of perverse interpretation."

The reformation of religion in the sixteenth century was undoubtedly a period of the most acute intellectual controversy and re-examination of fundamentals which the Church has known. After a momentous struggle the reformers rejected the authority of the Pope, and quickly afterwards that of the Catholic Church ; and then the floodgates of criticism were opened indeed. Holy Scripture, tradition, General Councils and Church authority of every kind were brought into question.

The result of all this questioning was to set the Divine origin, inspiration and authority of the Scriptures in the clearest possible light, as a doctrine which had been held by the Church from apostolic times. The human features of the various writings were not denied, and the difficulties involved in the formation of the canon were faced again with fearless independence and scholarship, but the convictions as to the Divine character of the Old and New Testaments only shone out more brightly in consequence. So far as the infallibility of Scripture, as the Word of God, was concerned, the Roman Church was in theoretical agreement. (See *Catholic Belief*, p. 50 : " The

Bible in the original language, or when truthfully translated, is indeed in itself the Word of God, and infallible.") But the Protestants affirmed (1) the "sufficiency" of Holy Scripture, as apart from tradition and the voice of the Church, in matters pertaining to salvation ; and (2) its "perspicuity"—namely, that it is its own interpreter, by the aid of the Holy Spirit in the individual, as distinctive from any authoritative human exposition.

Although the reformers' view of inspiration was by no means so rigid as is sometimes represented, it invariably regards the Divine authority of Scripture as residing in the Bible as a whole, and not in any part or portion of its contents, whether the recorded words of the prophets, or even of Jesus Christ Himself. The modern endeavour to treat the Bible as merely the "record of a revelation," or to set up the teaching of Christ whilst on earth as a separate tribunal of judgment, is contrary to the teaching of the Reformation as formulated in the Prayer Book, the Articles and other Confessions of Faith. The Bible is "God's Word written," "holy writ," or "the very pure Word of God." Its Divine origin stamps it as superior to all human authority, even to that of General Councils, and as to be matched only by itself, interpreting Scripture by Scripture. (See Articles VI., XX., XXI., XXIV., Preface to Book of Common Prayer.)

When regard is paid to its purpose the Bible is infallibly true ; it is "with absolute perfection framed" (Hooker), "the very sure and infallible rule" of doctrine (Jewel), the final court of appeal,

“God Himself speaking through the Scriptures” (*Cf.* Helvet., i. 1). Nevertheless, due account must be taken of the purpose of God in His revelation, and the reformers were not slow to rebuke those who claimed support for their political notions or Utopian schemes of government from the Bible.

As to the mode of inspiration Calvin thus writes, in words that sound freshly enough to-day: “Whether God did make Himself known to the fathers by oracles and visions, or inform them by the ministry and diligence of men of that which they should afterwards deliver to their posterity, yet it is out of all doubt that the firm certainty of that doctrine was engraven in their hearts, so that they were persuaded and did understand, that what they had learned did come from God; for God did always make undoubted assurance of credit for His word, which did far surpass all uncertain opinion.”

The supreme proof of the truth of God’s Word is, according to Calvin, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, surpassing all reason, sealing and confirming the faith of the godly. Yet “human proofs” are also available, which he sets forth as follows: (1) the wonderful efficacy of the Word of God though “delivered under a contemptible baseness of words”; (2) the antiquity of the Scriptures, Moses having received that which had been delivered by the Fathers “from hand to hand in a long process of time”; (3) the plain exposition of the sins of the patriarchs and others; (4) the miracles which can neither be gainsaid nor ascribed to magic; (5) the authenticity as well attested as

that of Plato, Aristotle or Cicero ; (6) the conversion of the Apostles ; (6) the consent and agreement of so many men, of so many ages and nations, to embrace the Scriptures ; (8) the godly lives of those who accept, and the ungodliness of those who reject them ; (9) the agreement between the nature of God revealed in the Bible and Nature.

The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made little change in the way in which the Scriptures were regarded by the great scholars of the Church.

Critical scholars, such as Pascal and Hooker, Butler and Paley, Bengel and Tregelles, Pusey and Lightfoot, all investigated and accepted, and by accepting confirmed the doctrine of inspiration already formulated by the early Fathers and the reformers. Their endorsement, therefore, and that of a host of lesser men of the historic faith cannot be dismissed as unimportant.

It is usual to date the rise of " modern criticism " from the end of the eighteenth century ; but until nearly the close of the nineteenth century the conclusions which seriously affect the traditional view of inspiration were confined to those who set out with rationalistic views of religion, or to professed unbelievers in the Christian faith. They were rejected after examination by scholars such as Bishops Ellicott, Perowne, Lightfoot, Westcott and Moule, and Professors Lumby, Orr, Sayce, W. H. Green, Sir William Ramsay, their rejection being based not on grounds of principle, but rather of historical and literary scholarship. They were, on the other hand, accepted by Professors

Cheyne, Driver and Robertson Smith, and after them by an increasing host of others. Their claim for acceptance and their effect on belief in the inspiration of Scripture will be the main subject of the next section.

The last century has proved that what the Bible has been in the West to all generations of the Church, that it has now become to all races of men. Deeply read Hindus, bigoted Moslems, scholarly Chinese, as well as the most degraded tribes, have recognised and welcomed it as the Word of God. It is a striking phenomenon that men of outstanding intellectuality and great national independence of mind like General Feng and Sadhu Sundar Singh have accepted the plenary inspiration of Scripture and rejected all modernist theories.

The Bible, apart from human aid, has been the cause of thousands of conversions of all races and types of men, in South America, Persia, India and Japan. It has lost nothing by translation into more than five hundred languages, and its religious appeal has been shown to be independent of age or race. It may be unsafe to argue from these facts that God is thus adding His present-day testimony to the truth of His Word ; but the facts themselves cannot reasonably be left out of account in forming our views on inspiration.

RESTATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION IN MODERN TERMS

Having come to an end of this brief historical review, we shall endeavour to express in modern

terms what is the nature of the claim to inspiration contained in the Bible itself, and, with the exceptions already noted, accepted by Christians generally throughout the world. It cannot be more tersely expressed than by saying that the Bible claims to be, and is, "God's Word written." The adjective implies that God's Word is not limited to the Bible, for it was conveyed through the living voice of Christ, and the prophets and Apostles, and is heard in the admonitions of the Holy Spirit, and in some sense through God's works in Providence and Nature. But it also implies that in the Bible we have an express and written revelation of His character, will and purpose ; of His incarnation and atoning work ; and of His promises to the Church, including the Advent hope.

Common sense requires that the expression "God's Word written " must be applied to the Bible as a whole, and not to any of its parts to the exclusion of the remainder. It asserts that the Bible *is* the Word of God, and not that it *contains* it: as if the Bible could be divided into two parts, one consisting of gems of revealed truth, and the other the casket containing them. We cannot, if we would, accept as indubitable revelation those passages, and only those, prefaced by "Thus saith the Lord," and reject the remainder.

There is no hint or suggestion of such a division anywhere in the words of Christ, or in the Scriptures, or in the teaching of the early Fathers. It is the Scriptures as a whole which are the divinely inspired oracles of God. The New Testament

expressly attributes to the Holy Ghost the words and phrases of the writers of the Old Testament other than their expressly recorded revelations from God.

It would be as absurd to isolate the saying of the fool, "There is no God," and treat it as an oracle, as to exclude it altogether from the scope of Divine inspiration. The Bible records both the evil deeds and the foolish words of men; its human character is apparent on every page, and some passages are only intelligible in the light of the circumstances of their origin. Yet, taken as a whole, the Bible stands as a marvellous living unity, and we may well endorse Hooker's dictum that it contains neither "excess or defect"; so that nothing could be added to render it more perfect for its purpose, or taken away without loss.

This Divine character does not exclude the human element, but the Divine and human elements are not separated as in a mechanical mixture of two substances, but united, qualifying and affecting one another as in a chemical compound.

"This book, so naturally and humanly written, as to a very large proportion of its contents," says Bishop Moule, "is yet God-made all through. . . . We feel the two elements or aspects, the human and the divine, each real and powerful, and both working in perfect harmony. The human is there, not in the least as a necessary element of error; rather as an element of delicate and beautiful truth, the truth of justest thought and feeling. The divine is there, as the message from Christ Himself, through His servant: sacred, authoritative,

binding on belief, giving solid ground for the soul's repose." ¹

The claim to inspiration which the Bible makes necessarily involves the claim to truth, and this must be granted no less to the historical than to the doctrinal parts. Reasonable latitude must be allowed for figure and metaphor; but it is unreasonable to extend mystical or parabolic interpretations over large areas which in their plain meaning and intention are historical. The claim is that according to its plain meaning and face value the Bible is true.

This argument cannot be pressed so as to prove verbal inerrancy in detail. But in some sense indeed inspiration is, and must be, verbal; for the thing of which it is predicated is a collection of words. Further, what is true of the whole must in some degree be true of the parts, and we cannot forget that Our Lord and His Apostles sometimes stressed individual words, and that the whole meaning of a passage may turn upon a single expression.

On the other hand, it is a mere matter of fact that the Bible as we have it has a margin of uncertainty as regards its text, which, however small, is still there, and there are also minor divergences in numbers, genealogies and lesser incidents between its various parts. These uncertainties and discrepancies remain in the only versions available for us, whatever we may speculate about the words originally written by the inspired authors.

¹ *Philippian Studies*, pp. 141, 144.

Such questions are entirely distinct from the charge of general historical untrustworthiness levelled by some, in the name of scholarship, against both Old and New Testaments. To admit this charge is to deny their *prima facie* claim to truth. The admission is also inconsistent with the broad lines of our Lord's teaching ; for whatever interpretation be placed upon particular sayings, it is incontestable that His conception of God's dealings with men was based upon the historical records of the Old Testament.

The Scripture is not a handbook of statecraft and politics as certain puritans fondly imagined, nor is it a text-book of science, even though, as a fact, it propounds much political truth and no scientific error. It refuses to answer idle questions and bans controversy over genealogical or philosophical subtleties.

The primary purpose of the revelation is spiritual, to make men wise unto salvation, to convict, correct and instruct in righteousness (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16). And, since spiritual things are spiritually discerned, it is only by the aid of the Holy Spirit that it can be rightly understood and applied. In His Divine hands it becomes a sword to pierce men's hearts, and the "living oracles" to guide their lives. To set the Bible as a "dead book" in contrast with the "living voice of the Spirit" is therefore altogether a false antithesis. It is the principal weapon of the Spirit, Who illuminates and expands the written Word, of which He is the supreme Author.

We cannot accept the easy maxim to "treat

the Bible as any other book," for that by all our experience it is not. True, we must apply ordinary standards of historical and literary judgment to its problems in their place ; but wherever spiritual values enter in, the ultimate test must be the guidance of the Spirit of God sought with humble and believing prayer. True faith is essential to a right judgment and unbelief came under our Lord's severest censure.

· It has frequently been noticed that the most successful evangelists are those with a deep love for the Bible, a wide knowledge of its pages, and a full belief in its inspiration. Indeed the final proof of inspiration is the test of experiment. The man who uses the Bible in the spirit of the 119th Psalm will find himself entering into every word of the experience there recorded. He will find it "sweet unto his taste" and "the rejoicing of his heart"; he will experience its uplifting, strengthening and quickening power; he will get from it light and teaching and understanding; he will be quickened and established in the way of righteousness; he will discover in it his salvation, his delight and his hope; it will afford him comfort in affliction, courage before his enemies, liberty of conscience, enlargement of heart and rectitude in action; and his mouth will be full of the praise of God's Word and testimonies. He will declare with conviction: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

QUESTIONS RAISED BY SCIENCE AND MODERN
CRITICISM

It is not a little surprising, after all that has been written during the last few years, that there are still found those who assume that modern science raises difficulties in the way of belief in the Bible. A doctor of science recently said to the writer : " It is the theologians who cannot believe in the Virgin Birth ; it presents no difficulty to us biologists." Not only by men of science who are wholehearted believers in the Bible " from cover to cover," but by men of science of every shade of belief, the truth is being constantly preached that there is no conflict between science and the Bible. A recent review of the supposed points of conflict between Science and Christianity by Professor E. W. Hobson, F.R.S., ends with the conclusion that all have arisen from a false interpretation on one side or the other.

From quite a different direction, in a recent book, *The Historic Faith in the Light of To-day*, Dr Rendle Short examines the Bible account of the creation and the deluge in the light of the most recent scientific knowledge and reaches the conclusion that, upon any reasonable interpretation, it is entirely credible as actual history.

It is well known that Professor Romanes, whilst Darwin's theory of Evolution was at the zenith of popularity, worked his way from agnosticism to faith, concluding that Revelation supplements Nature, and that " they logically and mutually corroborate one another."

Shortly before his death Professor A. R. Wallace, a collaborator of Darwin, wrote two considerable books, one to prove that the astronomical facts concerning our planet show that it has been specially designed as a home for the human race, and the other to prove the necessity, “*not* for blind laws and forces, but for immanent, directive and organising MIND,” at work in the world (*The World of Life*, p. 354).

It is impossible, within the present limits, to explain all the “scientific difficulties” which friends or foes of the Bible have found in its pages. No fresh ones have come into currency for half-a-century, and a compendious answer will be found in a popular form in an excellent leaflet by John Urquhart, with the sub-title, “The Bible and Science” (Marshall Bros., 2d., 171st thousand).

Full information as to the present state of the Evolution theory as it affects the Bible will be found in *New Light on the Doctrine of Creation* (G. Macready Price, Fleming Revell Co.), *Evolution Criticised* (T. B. Bishop, Oliphant), *The Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, and the works quoted above.

One particular point may be mentioned merely by the way of illustration. Some years ago a favourite objection was found in the creation of Light on the first day, whereas it was only on the fourth day of creation that the sun was made and set to rule the day. A careful study of the text, with a good commentary, will at once remove part of the supposed difficulty. That diffused solar light existed on the earth when the aqueous clouds and mist which are supposed once to have sur-

rounded the earth, and before the sun and moon were seen, is a common hypothesis. The existence of light before the formation of the sun is also a commonplace of recent astronomical theory ; but it is only since Einstein's great discovery that we have realised the absolutely primary place of light in the constitution of the physical universe. Is it fanciful to see in this one of the many traces of Divine Omniscience in the first chapter of Genesis ? It may be ; but it is one of fifty instances in which objections to this very chapter have been outgrown by the progress of science. We have still not come to the end of the truth finally expressed by Francis Bacon, and adopted by Charles Darwin as a motto for his *Origin of Species* : " Let no man think or maintain that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's Word or in the book of God's Works—divinity or philosophy ; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress and proficiency in both." The same idea exactly underlies a declaration made some years ago at a meeting of the British Association by eight hundred students of science : " We conceive that it is impossible for the Word of God, as written in the book of Nature, and God's Word, written in Holy Scripture, to contradict one another, however much they may appear to differ. We are not forgetful that physical science is not complete, but is only in a condition of progress, and that at present our finite reason only enables us to see through a glass darkly, and we confidently believe that a time will come when the two records will be seen to agree in every particular."

THE BIBLE TREATMENT OF SCIENCE AND
EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

There we might be content to leave the matter of "scientific difficulties," but we must not neglect to point out that the Bible is not merely reconcilable with science, but that there is a freedom from scientific mistakes which to some minds amounts to a positive evidence of Divine origin. So Mr Maunder, an eminent astronomer, after a detailed study of every astronomical reference in the Bible reaches the conclusion that "by no process of research could man find for himself the facts that are stated there. They must have been revealed" (*The Astronomy of the Bible*, by E. W. Maunder, F.R.A.S.).

To revert to the first chapter of Genesis, the materialist Haeckel says we can "bestow our just and sincere admiration on the Jewish lawgiver's grand insight into nature, and his simple and natural Hypothesis of creation," containing as it does "two great and fundamental ideas . . . with surprising clearness and simplicity—the idea of separation or *differentiation*, and the idea of progressive development or *perfecting*" (*History of Creation*, pp. 37-38, English translation). Romanes went further and stated that "the order in which the flora and fauna are said by the Mosaic account to have appeared on the earth corresponds with that which the theory of evolution requires and the evidence of geology proves" (quoted by M'Cosh, *Religious Aspects of Evolution*, p. 99).

Let the reader imagine a committee of scientific men of to-day sitting down to write an account of the genesis of the world, which shall be as free from error as this is stated to be, and yet be a vehicle of Divine Revelation to all mankind, teaching the vastly important religious truths involved, to be understood not only by all races, but by all races at all periods of their development, and this within the limit of a few hundred words—would they have succeeded so well? Let this chapter be compared with the crude, mistaken, grossly superstitious, unintelligible, irreligious and uninspiring creation stories of the most enlightened days of India, Greece, Rome or Babylonia, and how is the contrast to be accounted for? If this chapter does not bear on its face the stamp of a Divine Revelation, how is that stamp to be recognised and where is it to be found?

MIRACLES

The denial of the possibility of miracles is perennial; it began with Celsus and Porphyry, revived with Voltaire and Hume, was popularised by Tyndall and Huxley, and to-day is even being preached from some modernist pulpits as being of positive advantage to Christianity. It is strictly speaking not a question of science, but of philosophy. A generation ago Huxley revived the objections to miracle raised by Hume, confessedly basing his difficulties on grounds of historical evidence and intrinsic improbability, and not on those of scientific impossibility. (Huxley says:

“The position that miracles are ‘impossible’ cannot be sustained.” — *Science and Christian Tradition*, pp. 204, 207.)

Yet, although most modern rationalists disown the scientific “impossibility” of miracles, their attitude of unbelief is clearly derived from a misconception of the universality of law indistinguishable from this. Harnack describes the “order of Nature” as “inviolable,” and only admits miracle in the sense of marvellous and inexplicable reactions of “psychic forces.” So he denies the possibility of the stilling of the storm, whilst admitting that of the healing of the blind. There is something pathetic in the modernist search after a non-miraculous Christianity, it is so futile and so unnecessary.

The whole argument for Miracle has been re-stated in J. R. Illingworth’s *The Gospel Miracles*. The main argument there employed is not very different from the argument for Creation—namely, that Freedom and Power are essential to our idea of God, and ultimately to our belief in the rationality of Natural Law.

But this argument has been immensely strengthened by the trend of philosophic thought during the past thirty years, which has seen a great reaction away from materialism. Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* can only be regarded as an argument against materialism. Moreover, modern ideas of personality have been more and more tending to faith in the freedom and supremacy of the human spirit. Scientific researches into the nature of the Atom, of Light, of Space and of Ether have all

shattered much of the framework of the old faith in Matter, and shown more and more that the world is the product of Ideas. But every step in this direction is a fresh release from that unnecessary bondage of soul which can only conceive of a fixed uniformity of natural law, as if God must live for ever in a strait-waistcoat of His own designing !

And *why* should we believe in the healing of the blind and disbelieve in the stilling of the tempest ? The only appropriate test of an act of God is to ask whether it is in accordance with His character and purpose. He Who could create the world of wind and water could still the storm, and he Who could create man could raise him from the dead. As to the evidence, that for the empty tomb is precisely of the same character, but more full, precise and manifold than that for the crucifixion ; and it is only on grounds of high philosophy that the latter can be believed and the former disputed.

MODERN CRITICISM

There will be many who will feel that even if modern science has not raised insuperable difficulties against accepting the Bible's claim to inspiration, the case is far different with modern historical and literary criticism. It is certainly true that criticism of a destructive type has done far, far more to undermine faith in the Bible than all the teachings of science, or declamations of those who have used supposed scientific difficulties to attack the Christian faith.

In one respect there is a close parallel. Among theological critics as among scientists there have been many who, on philosophical grounds, have been disbelievers in miracle. Indeed the great founders of the modern school of the Old Testament criticism, de Wette, Graf, Wellhausen and Kuenen, all adopted this position, and their historical and critical studies were pursued with a view to explaining the Old Testament records on a purely naturalistic basis. Such persons, regarding miracles as intrinsically incredible, have never seemed able to believe in the sincerity and open-mindedness of those who disagree with them ; and have stigmatised all opposition to their literary theories as traditionalism and obscurantism, and have appealed to all lovers of truth to accept their conclusions on the authority of their own undoubted claim to Hebrew scholarship. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the weight of scholarly authority in this country was on the other side. But during the present century the majority of theological teachers in our universities have accepted most of the literary and historical conclusions of the German school, whilst either rejecting or giving a hesitating acceptance to their rationalistic theory.

It is this close connection which exists between a rationalistic philosophy and the critical conclusions which it has brought into being, and which are now claimed in its support, which constitutes the peculiar difficulty in forming a right estimate of modern criticism.

On the one hand, there has been lavished upon

the Old and New Testament books during the past century a wealth of scholarship and labour, much of it in the hands of devoted Christian men, which, in the long run, cannot but be fruitful in the cause of truth. On the other hand, some of the ablest scholars have been professed rationalists, and their conclusions are based on arguments penetrated in every direction by their prejudice against the supernatural.

The matter is not rendered easier by the present almost chaotic condition of Old Testament and New Testament criticism. To take a particular example, one writer asserts that we must regard the account in Ex. xxv.-xxvii., etc., as a post-exilic ideal construction based on the book of Ezekiel, and adds, "modern students of the Pentateuch find the picture of the desert sanctuary and its worship irreconcilable with the historical development of religion and the cultus in Israel" (Art. "Tabernacle," Hasting's *Dict. Bib.*). On the other hand, more recently, Professor König, of Bonn, one of Germany's most eminent scholars, sees "no reliable evidence against the existence of the tabernacle as described in Ex. xxv.-xxviii." (Wace, *The Old Testament and the present State of Criticism*, p. 6). If König be right, the whole critical theory of the Pentateuch is wounded in a vital place.

In the work just quoted Dean Wace exclaims: "From this broad review of current criticism I would urge again one broad conclusion which cannot be too urgently pressed upon the thoughtful public. The critics and their echoes in the Press are continually speaking in the style of

Roma locuta est; causa finita est. German criticism has pronounced that Genesis and the Pentateuch are a late compilation; let the world and the Church accommodate themselves to the fact; what needs to be loudly asserted is that this claim of finality is palpably untrue." It is only fair to add that in the last year or two there have been several admissions from the "critical" side also, that conclusions once thought to be settled for ever are increasingly uncertain and must be regarded as subject to revision.

Thus in *The Expositor* of May 1923 Professor A. C. Welch reviews the present position of Old Testament Criticism, and says: "Increasingly grave objection has been raised against its three cardinal positions . . . and each of these is seriously shaken." In the analysis he concludes that "neither the use of the Divine names nor the use of other criteria leads to sure results." He gives reasons for doubting the prevailing critical views regarding Deuteronomy, and in the historical parts of the P document he finds "the Achilles heel of the theory," where more than anywhere it has suffered severely. Whilst maintaining the need of historical study he regards it as "sure . . . that the hypothesis can only be accepted with grave and fundamental modifications."

Let any reader consider carefully Finn's able criticism of the works of Driver and M'Neile, and Naville's archæological studies on the Pentateuch, and he will find that this conclusion is inevitable.

ARCHÆOLOGY

Another reason why we may hesitate to give up the historical character of the Old Testament is that some of the leading archæologists not only speak of the popular school of critics in very trenchant terms, but claim that the whole tendency of present-day discovery is to overthrow the critical theories and substantiate the truth of the Bible records.

Professor Sayce (see *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*), Naville (see *Archæology of the Old Testament*), and now Sir William Ramsay all tell us that whereas in early life they were disposed to accept as valid the processes of literary analysis and historical reconstruction, on which the critical hypotheses rest, their archæological studies have forced them to cross over into the opposition camp.

So unprejudiced a writer as Sir W. Flinders Petrie in a recent article on "Current Fallacies about History" speaks of the "curious perversion in the literary criticism," of the "mental failure," "strong prepossession," and "figments of the critics." How is it that such phrases come to be used if modern criticism is really a sure and scientific process?

It is not only leading archæologists who adopt this attitude, but not a few historical and classical scholars have spoken in strong condemnation of the methods used by Wellhausen and his followers. Dr Welldon, writing "as a scholar," says, "there is not among classical scholars in Great Britain, if there is to-day even in Germany, one who could

pretend to solve the problem of Greek and Roman literature upon the principles—if, indeed, they deserve to be called principles—of the higher criticism as applied to the Old and New Testament.” So in a recent review a French historian, M. Camille Julian, describes the typical methods of critical analysis of documents by means of phraseology, improbabilities, contradictions, anachronisms, etc., as outworn and effete. In secular history ancient books like Homer’s *Odyssey* have by marvellous conformity with archæological discovery shown that such literary methods lead only to fallacious results, and he prophesies a similar reaction in regard to Old Testament criticism.

For their patient study of the Hebrew, and their elucidation of the text, we must ever be grateful to Driver, Cheyne and other Hebrew scholars ; but in so far as they have accepted Wellhausen’s imaginary reconstruction of Jewish history on rationalistic lines, we have little cause to thank them.

For the effect of this reconstruction is to make miracle and prediction disappear from the Old Testament, and to turn what purport to be the commandments of God into the traditions of men. Were it a mere matter of authorship here, or dating there, or details of history, we should not find among Hebrew scholars such violent controversy, nor amongst the world of archæological and classical students any desire to interfere in problems not their own.

We conclude therefore that the present state of

the modern criticism of the Old Testament affords no ground for abandoning our belief in its own claim to be both true and inspired. The original ground for disbelief in its miracles was not historical but philosophical; the literary theories of the critics have provoked opposition from archæologists and others, and have largely broken down, and the historical character of the Old Testament narratives is being established more and more by independent discovery.

This is the more satisfactory to the Christian believer because it accords exactly with the teaching of our Lord and His apostles about the Old Testament, who accepted the broad lines of Bible history as true, and believed in its Messianic types and predictions as having been divinely given, and as certainly fulfilled.

CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Round the New Testament also the same questions rage, of the occurrence of miracle, of the Christian doctrine of sin and judgment, of prophecy, and of the immediate presence of God on earth manifested in a supernatural manner. But here the real issues come more into the open and are no longer buried under complicated theories of literary analysis and subjectively reconstructed history. Moreover, the far greater quantity of contemporary literary and archæological evidence narrows the range of imagination which has so free a field in the Old Testament criticism.

The attack of the Tübingen school on the

authenticity of the Pauline epistles has utterly failed ; and later attacks on the historical value of St Luke's writings have been shattered by the researches of Sir William Ramsay, and by Professor Harnack, who have together entirely re-established their authenticity and great historical value. Rationalists have been reluctantly forced to admit that the belief in the Virgin Birth and physical resurrection of our Lord go back undoubtedly to the days before St Paul's conversion, and that the historical evidence for the miraculous parts of the gospels is as strong as, or stronger than, that for the remainder. Anyone who will read *Gore's Belief in Christ*, or Knox's *On What Authority*, will quickly be convinced that the recent efforts of rationalists and modernists to employ the apparatus of literary criticism to reproduce a picture of Jesus Christ consistent with their varying presuppositions have completely failed. More than this, starting from diverse standpoints, they have neutralised and mutually destroyed one another. The net result of all the research and of all the theorising is to make the picture of Christ in the Gospels more and more certainly true to historical fact. But, whilst the effect has been to strengthen, and not weaken, the historical evidence for the truth of the gospels, mere intellectual evidence can never compel belief. It can prove that the " Christ of History " is just Jesus Christ as He is presented in the four gospels without any subtraction or modification, the Son of Man and the Son of God, the One who gave Himself a Ransom for many ; but beyond that it cannot go. Now, as then, some believe and some

believe not, and some believe but dare not confess (Matt. xxviii. 17 ; John xii. 42). What is increasingly evident, however, is that there is nothing in modern research or discovery to cause the true servants of Jesus Christ to doubt in the least degree the truth once delivered to the Saints.

EVANGELICAL POSITION STATED

Space will not permit of further consideration of these important issues, but an endeavour must be made at least to state the evangelical position.

Considered without prejudice and from the standpoint of a believer in Jesus Christ and His teaching, the evidence adduced by science, by archæology and by literary criticism goes to strengthen rather than to weaken our faith in the Bible. We can accept the first chapters of Genesis as undoubtedly inspired, and gladly welcome each new discovery of science as helping us in its interpretation. We may accept the miracles which the Bible records whether in the Old or New Testament in the assurance that neither in science nor in sober historical criticism is there any ground for disbelief. We can marvel at the freedom from scientific error in the Bible as a proof of God's providential care and the guidance of its authors by His Spirit.

We welcome all the new light which modern archæological or literary research can cast upon the Old Testament, but we look with suspicion upon an historical reconstruction which originated in an attempt to eliminate the miraculous. We

believe that the evidence shows that the Pentateuch was, in the main, compiled in the time of Moses from contemporary or earlier documents, and that it may be taken at its own valuation as a revelation from God, written down for our learning. We see Israel, from the days of Abraham onwards, surrounded by great and powerful civilisations, some of them intensely sinful, and all of them outside the sphere of God's dispensational revelation to His chosen people. We are prepared to adopt any new interpretation or orientation which the facts of archæology may suggest, and are learning more and more of God's patience in His progressive revelation, and of His power to reveal Himself truly and adequately, and yet according to the limitations of every age of mankind. But we see no reason to give up one whit of our belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament, or to depart from that faith in its teaching which we have learned from Christ's precept and example.

Moral and intellectual difficulties remain ; but they become no greater, but rather less, for us as our knowledge expands ; and they do not compare with the tangle of inconsistencies and incredibilities which surround the popular critical point of view. We have no love for obscurantism, and no fear of what new discovery may bring forth. Indeed there is need for much more constructive study of the Bible in relation to modern knowledge ; and the multiplication of books of this character by writers such as Orr, Naville, Kyle and Short is much to be desired.

Above all, the truth of the Bible will be estab-

lished by its spread and study. As the disciples went preaching everywhere the Lord confirmed the word with signs following (Mark xvi. 20). In the eighteenth century the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield did more to confound rationalism than all the apologetic literature, and a revival of religion to-day would be the surest and divinest way of dispersing modern forms of unbelief.

VII

THE FIAT OF AUTHORITY

REV. T. C. HAMMOND

INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY

I

THE problem of inspiration has been brought prominently forward during recent years. It is of the utmost importance that any discussion of such an all-important aspect of the Christian faith should be at once reverent and searching. The idea of inspiration presented in the Sacred Scriptures is that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21), or yet again that "Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable."

The obvious fact which the writers of these words sought to convey (it is not necessary for the moment to entertain any question as to the time, place or persons responsible for their appearance, as all such questions are here strictly irrelevant) is that a conception had grown up in the minds of men that certain utterances and certain writings were only explicable by reference to a particular operation of God the Holy Ghost. Large questions are here assumed: the personality of God, if not the doctrine of the Trinity; the desire of God to open up an avenue of communication in so far as it

is regarded as a human utterance under a Divine influence. We feel at liberty to assume these great questions also. We are not seeking to establish *a priori* the reasonableness of revelation nor are we seeking to marshal proofs for the personality of God. That God is capable of communicating His will to man, and has in fact communicated it, may be regarded as necessary corollaries from the fact of the Incarnation, and that the Incarnation took place is herein regarded as proven. The limit of our space will further preclude anything like an extensive citation or examination of authorities.

This chapter seeks to come to close terms with the admitted fact of inspiration and to clear the ground by rigorous inquiry into its nature and consequent characteristics. It may be well at the outset to consider the oft-repeated statement, "The Church has never defined inspiration." It would be more correct to say that the Church (if by that term be meant the Christian consciousness as expressed in creed and worship) has not given an exhaustive or comprehensive definition of inspiration. Every effort to secure for the Scriptures as they now exist a peculiar place of authority is so far a tentative definition of inspiration. In the great conflict of the sixteenth century the reformed communions vindicated for the Scriptures a wholly unique place, and the Communion of the Church of England not only defined the limits of the canon, but definitely asserted its sufficiency for all "articles of faith." The Council of Trent also gave a unique position to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, declaring emphatically that

“one God is the Author of both.” Although the Council added tradition as a supplementary and equally authoritative part of the Rule of Faith, it united with the reformed communions in decreeing that the Scriptures (including the Apocrypha, however, in this designation) were produced through the direct agency of God. Inspiration wholly undefined would be wholly unintelligible. Definition after all gives the content of a word or phrase. Every declaration of the unique origin or of the particular authority of Scripture is to that extent a definition of inspiration.

Furthermore there seems to lurk in the proposition “The Church has never defined inspiration” an implied censure upon any attempt on the part of Christian students to supply a definition. But even if the statement were completely correct, which cannot be maintained, it might still become necessary with the advance of thought to supply the omission and create such definitions for final acceptance by the Church. There is bound to be much travail in thought before satisfactory conclusions can be drawn, and every such effort helps to a greater or less degree. Definitions in their more elaborate conciliar or symbolic form are attempts to safeguard truth from expressed misrepresentation, and it is only when misrepresentation emerges that such definitions become necessary. They render explicit what was previously involved but was not clearly seen until an opposing error forced it into view. Every honest effort therefore to deduce the logical consequences of any admitted principle, however slightly defined

previously, is worthy of careful consideration and must result in clearing the way towards a fuller conception. It is thus that existing Church definitions have been established. They are nearly all the result of independent vigorous thought on the part of individual students.

Dr Orr in his *Progress of Dogma* suggests that two problems yet remain for elucidation by the Christian consciousness: the problem of Eschatology and the problem of the Holy Scriptures. The repeated declarations concerning the import of inspiration would suggest that Christian thought is now being directed towards the solution of that problem. As long as man possesses the spirit of independent inquiry it is idle to warn him off the path of research by such deterring placards.

What then is Inspiration? All schools of thought contemplated within the limits of this article would agree there is a personal God and that He has revealed Himself to man. Inspiration is connected with the phenomena of revelation. The Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God, and that revelation has come down to us in the form of history. Previous to the Incarnation we find a religious history professing to embody direct messages from God, and subsequent to the Incarnation we find a number of writers and teachers who claim to explain with authority the meaning of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and further to supply to the world a sufficient record of His teaching. By common consent it is further agreed that the Sacred Scriptures contain

the only authentic accounts of our Lord and His Apostles and Evangelists and the earlier teaching communicated to the people of Israel and treasured by them as Divine oracles.

While some would extend the term inspiration to other utterances of men and to cultural activities such as Art and Law it is generally agreed that "religious inspiration" attaches peculiarly to the people of Israel and has for its product the Sacred Scriptures. Modern Europe has attached a value to these writings far beyond that which is accorded to any other so-called "sacred" literature. Their unique character is freely acknowledged to be a consequence of inspiration. We may exclude from view that section of the community which would deny all revelation and confine ourselves to the consideration of the facts connected with the communication of God's will to man. Granted that such communication has taken place, there is no serious competitor for the honour with the Book which is known as the Bible. If God has spoken at all He has spoken through His Son, and as a matter of fact the communication of God's will to man in Christ Jesus our Lord has reached us in the form of a book.

It may be necessary to discuss various modifications of this statement when dealing with the question of Authority, but for the present it must suffice to point out that the lineaments of the historic Christ are found in the Bible and in the Bible only. No single article of the Christian creed can be satisfactorily derived from any other source. The Deist may reject revelation because it is not

written on the sky. The Romanist may seek to embellish the story of the Cross with the assistance of so-called modern revelations. But the Central Figure of history remains in all His great characteristics just what the Gospel story depicts Him.

The only method of communication of ideas which we can understand as rational beings is that which achieves its purpose by the awakening of similar ideas in the object to whom the communication is made. The most universal form of such communication is by means of language. While language in its primitive form does not exclude other signs it has gradually confined itself to sounds and their visual symbolic expression in written characters. If the story of the Incarnation and the voice of the prophet convey any true message from God, then God has employed the media of spoken and written words, the universal characteristic of language, to reveal His will to man.

In all communication between rational beings two factors exist. There is the existence of the idea or thought in the mind of the communicator and a mode of expression which serves to awaken a similar idea or thought in the person to whom the communication is made. The success of any communication moreover depends upon the adequacy of the expression. Where the mode of expression is defective the apprehension of the original idea or thought is imperfect. It is not necessary to carry the investigation back to the sense-perceptions of the lower animals nor even to the ingenious attempts that have been

made to explain the origin of language. It is now generally admitted that the phenomenon of Scriptural revelation occurred at a period of human history when mankind had already developed an elaborate language and had found means for its symbolic representation in a very advanced script. We are no longer required to post-date the Pentateuch on the ground that writing was unknown at the time of Moses or even at the time of Abraham. The written revelation like the Incarnate Word came "in the fulness of time."

When the literary development, consequent upon the employment of written symbols for thought, is studied a remarkable fact emerges. The stereotyping of the spoken word acted as a stimulus to memory and in addition furnished it with a species of intellectual shorthand, so that great ideas, arrived at originally by long travail of thought, became easy of apprehension in their symbolic form, and a great advance in deductive and inductive reasoning was thus rendered possible. The result of this facility of discussion, on the other hand, was to make man more and more dependent on the written symbol, as he had previously become dependent on the spoken word, which in itself exhibited the same symbolic character but in a more transient form. The history of the human race offers no example of any serious development of consecutive thought apart from the use of words, and illustrates abundantly the close connection between written and spoken language.

It is therefore in accordance with the analogy of human experience that God should graciously

employ those media which have proved the only effective instruments for the communication of thought. Words are indispensable when men are invited to pursue any lengthy train of thought. Without them the mind becomes speedily exhausted by the multitude of separate details which the word holds together in a compact and easily accessible form. At an advanced stage of human mental development words and thoughts become inseparable and all advance in knowledge consists either in closer attention to the connotation of known words or in the addition of other words to the vocabulary. This is particularly true in the case of non-sensuous conceptions popularly, although inadequately, described as "abstract thought." Such great terms as "justice," "righteousness," "sovereignty," "grace," "law," hold in solution the findings of the ages and only yield their treasures to the inquirer in the form of words and yet other words. Every anxious question concerning "eternity" and every earnest answer to the soul of man find outlet by means of words.

The fact is so commonplace that it is frequently forgotten and men speak of "thoughts" when the content of their mind is a collection of "words" and the expression of these selfsame thoughts forms a stream of words. Even the dumb can only keep abreast of the ever-developing knowledge of the race by forming for themselves visual symbols which enable them to give expression to the same power of language. Language is essential for the communication of advanced consecutive thought and the most universal form of language is words

connected with one another by recognised laws. Music has sometimes been offered as a substitute for spoken thought, but its range seems strictly limited to the sphere of the emotions, and even if this be disputed, music as a medium of thought, if it be employed at all, exists in this sense only for the very *élite* of humanity.

It is not surprising to find that God in His gracious condescension has chosen the common medium to make known His will. But inspiration, in the sense which attaches to it in this connection, if it is to achieve its end, must secure the apprehension of God's will. Inspiration as the activity of God for the purpose of revealing His will to men cannot be conceived as a property simply of the inspired person. Inspiration constituted the subject of it a revealer of the mind of God. Inspiration does not terminate upon the individual and exhaust its purpose in giving him or her a clear vision of the Eternal Jehovah. Inspiration is intended to be, and must be, if the end of the true communication of the mind of God is to be achieved, an inspiration of utterance. "Holy men of old" were indeed "borne along" of the Divine Spirit, impelled like a barque in full sail, but the simile assures us that the issue of the impelling force was that "holy men of God—spake."

It greatly helps in the study of any question to keep the ultimate object of the study in view. The Old and New Testaments are clear upon the point that inspired men were sent by God in order that their hearers might know the will of God. Any Divine influence which did not issue in a Divine

revelation to men cannot properly be regarded as within the scope of the Biblical idea of inspiration. The popular saying, "The men indeed were inspired but not their utterances," completely ignores this essential condition. An inspired man who could not give utterance to his inspiration would be as little use to humanity as St Paul was when he was "caught up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter." It was only to the extent that his experience was recountable, that inspiration, in the sense of a special endowment enabling him to reveal the truth of God, is applicable to his experience. If all God's teachers heard only unspeakable words there would be no Bible.

In addition to ignoring the essential condition which makes the power of communicating ideas to others the very core of the idea of inspiration, this popular phrase does violence to that interdependence of ideas and words which is the characteristic of all advanced thought. The mind is unquestionably something other than the thoughts which occupy it. The inspired man is likewise something other than his utterances. But thought is the essential activity of the mind, so that we only know of the existence of the mind by the thoughts which occupy it. Similarly utterances of a holy and heavenly character are the essential activity of the inspired man and we only know of his inspiration by means of his utterances. If the messages of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul and John are entirely removed, how much is left to enable a student to form a true estimate of their character? What

have men been given to draw the picture of the Beloved Son but the record of His words and acts? Here is at once the condescension of the Divine and His tribute to the highest power in the nature of man, that He has taken human language and made it the medium through which we see Him Who is invisible. If we possess only the utterances, then inspiration must be resident in them or else the inspiration of God ceased with the removal of the inspired men.

The phrase is not employed to compel that conclusion. The object is to relieve the student of apparent difficulty by suggesting that inspiration created indeed great ideas and some measure of the exaltation occasioned found expression in the lofty utterances of prophet and evangelist. "You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will, but the scent of the roses will cling to it still." Then there is a resident power in the words consequent upon the gift of inspiration, and it is this resident power that makes them different from ordinary words. It is this residue of a Divine influence upon their author which gives them any value they may possess. The words, on the theory, share in the inspiration of the man, but receive their inspiration at second-hand. There is no relief from difficulty here. The imagined freedom of criticism arises from a pure misconception. The objector may at once retort. Either the remaining exaltation of mind which gives the utterance of the writer or speaker its value as a message of God is adequate to achieve that result, in which case it would be simpler to speak of the message as

inspired, or it is inadequate, in which case, as the message is affected with doubt, it is not possible to be sure of the precise character of an inspiration which is only discernible in the message. In either case the difficulty is only removed one step and emerges again when discussion centres round the question as to what may be considered adequate for the full revelation of God and for the urgent necessities of men.

The very interdependence of thought and word which human development has created makes it fatally easy for a sophist to entangle himself and his hearers in a net of ambiguous phrases. The pity is that most men through lack of developing a healthy critical faculty are unconscious sophists. If the root conception of inspiration is the endowment of chosen men with a capacity for communicating to their fellows the will of God as it has been communicated to them, it follows that the message must be inspired. Inspiration must be regarded as the expression of the Divine will in human thought, to the extent that human thought can express it, and for that purpose, seeing that God has employed the ordinary vehicle of human thought, speech or language, the vehicle of communication must be adequate to the expression of the human concept of the Divine will created in the mind by the operation of the Holy Ghost, the words must reproduce the thought, and the thought must be capable of being awakened by the words.

It is not denied that there are difficulties, and very great difficulties, surrounding this conception of inspiration. It is contended, however, that it is a

reasonable conception in itself, and that the difficulties, on examination, prove to be of the kind incidental to any idea of a message of God to man, and that similar and even greater difficulties beset any other theory.

As a rule the opponents of the view here advocated set small store by the evidence of antiquity, yet it ought to give some pause to reflect that by the admission of most students the prevailing view in the early Church was the view now almost ridiculed under the title of Verbal Inspiration. The students of those early ages are not reliable guides on matters of natural science, but in the instance under consideration they were in possession of all the facts, including, as the varied forms of quotation from the Old Testament in the New are sufficient to testify, the perplexing problem of variant readings. It is straining credulity to assert that the significance of this fact wholly escaped them and such competent students of more modern days as Calamy and Ussher. The opponents of verbal inspiration sometimes adduce such obvious arguments as to cause a doubt as to whether they really have grasped the moving principles of those they criticise.

The objection to verbal inspiration arises very often from a mistaken notion as to what the words imply. The ancients are not credited with the same accuracy of quotation which is now demanded. The need for scrupulousness in quotation has attached a fictitious value to the *ipsissima verba* of an author and any departure from the words actually employed is regarded as a departure

from accurate citation. In this rigid demand for literal quotation two independent elements are confused. A writer is entitled to have his exact words quoted, as otherwise a careless scribe or dishonest opponent might seriously misrepresent him. Yet frequently when after such quotation the words in question are canvassed it becomes necessary for the elucidation of his meaning to reproduce the phrase in other words. Verbal repetition is not the only way, is frequently not the best way, to secure a proper appreciation of a writer's thought.

The difficulties of translation afford a still more striking illustration of this fact. A reader finds it necessary sometimes when seeking to place himself *en rapport* with a writer to remodel the phraseology in terms more akin to the reader's normal modes of thought. Words only exhibit consecutive thought when they are taken in their proper relation to each other. Certain words are crucial and determinate, certain other words are relatively immaterial. Whole sentences can be recast without any alteration in the meaning of a speaker or writer.

As this point is frequently overlooked a simple example may prove of assistance. There is a text in St Luke's Gospel which reads, "And were continually in the temple praising and blessing God" (xxiv. 53). Some modern critics believe that there is here an example of "conflation." Two recensions of St Luke's Gospel, one containing the word "praising" and the other the word "blessing," have been, on this view, combined in the Received Text. Whatever may be the value of the theory

it is evident that no essential alteration has been introduced by the omission or insertion of the word "praising." Suppose that some redactor had added the words "and Mary" after the word "God," the text would have been hopelessly corrupted, even as the commentator corrupted 1 Cor. iii. 15 by inserting the words "of Purgatory" after the word "fire." This may serve to show that on any theory words are important and in all theories words are susceptible of variation without violation to the underlying thought.

The opponents of verbal inspiration conjure up a picture of mechanical transmission after the manner of a gramophone record that has been just impressed and ever after reproduces the impressions, faults as well as anything else, that have been received. Nothing is further from the truth. If God intended to deliver a mechanical message it seems obvious to reason that He would have employed mechanical means. If man can teach a parrot to talk, and can reproduce the sounds of the human voice by means of a metal disc, God, it is to be assumed, could deliver a message of mere words, without soul or mind behind them. But the Scripture record assures us that God spoke through men. There is little of the ecstasy or trance associated with inspired messages, though, because these are also human experiences, they are not wholly absent. The Divine message was formulated under the guidance of God in those conditions which are incident to the development of human thought. It may be assumed that there were real ideas and rational processes behind the utterances

of the prophets just as there are real ideas and rational processes behind the utterances of ordinary men. The Divine influence rendered these ideas peculiarly exalted and adequate to that conception of God which, within the limitations of our finite humanity and any further limitation of age and actual development, man was enabled to grasp and hold.

Verbal inspiration means no more than that the language in which these ideas, produced by normal rational processes and yet produced by God, are expressed, is an adequate vehicle for their communication and suffers only from those limitations by which the ideas themselves are inevitably bound. If the words of the prophet are inadequate expressions of his idea, by what mysterious process has his idea found adequate representation in modern thought? Is not the divorce between word and thought suspiciously like a device for doing honour to the messenger while retaining liberty to disregard his message?

The view here presented is as remote from a mechanical theory as it can be. God employed the natural activities of men after the manner in which these activities usually operate. The intimate connection between word and thought is not disturbed, nor are any of the processes normal to reflection and its expression. Over and above the perfectly natural processes is placed the overruling activity of God Himself directing these processes towards the faithful delivery of His will to man. The so-called "human element" in Scripture here finds its appropriate place.

There is one observable feature in human speech that assists the student who declines to make an unnatural divorce between the thought and its expression in word. Language is not wholly, indeed it may be said is not mainly, mechanical. There are laws of connection in it which relate it closely to the spiritual sphere. One of the characteristics of language is that it varies in expression with the object which the communicator of the thought seeks to attain. The demand for precision varies with the nature of the thought within reasonable limits. A treatise on botany requires closer attention to the structural details of plants than would a descriptive article on their distribution in wild profusion in the forest. The one object in the latter is to bring vividly before us the effect on a spectator of nature's profusion. There is a limit to this freedom of expression, for facts are inter-related, but the freedom within limits is indisputable.

This peculiarity of language lies behind the popular justification of "the use of phenomenal expressions." The term itself is scarcely correct inasmuch as science is itself phenomenal. But it serves to illustrate the fact that there can be a form of speech true to the purpose in hand which is nevertheless free from the restriction of technicalities that attach themselves to a scientific vocabulary. The proper criterion which should be employed in estimating the suitability of any form of speech is regard to the particular purpose of the speaker. Knowledge is so vast that there is an inevitable division of it into sections in everyday discourse. It is not wise to assume a priori that

God in His relations must discard this feature of the communication of ideas.

Inspiration is an activity of God upon men having for its object such an expression of thought in words as shall reveal to the sons of men the eternal purpose of God. But it is necessary to guard against a too ready assumption that the purpose of God stands apart in isolation from the development of human life. There has arisen a school of thought which occupies itself with extracting the single thread of the Divine purpose from the surrounding web of human experiences. With a ready assurance, which seems wholly unwarranted, the secular events of Israel's history are placed on one side and regarded as a human integument through which the Divine content imperfectly showed itself. As one thread out of many, an internal property independent of its sheath formed by the events of time, the spiritual is placed over against the natural, the Divine over against the human. As a consequence of this, in order to assist in the disintegration of that which comes to man as a unity, the revelation of God in and through human action, the theory of degrees of inspiration has been suggested. The obvious distinction between the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the apparently prosaic details of Old Testament history is made the base for asserting that some passages are more inspired than others. Subjectivity is unleashed and urged upon a search for those features which present themselves as specially commendable. The theory assumes a transcendent revelation which has no relation to the immanent movements

of God in human experience and as such ought to be discredited by those who have most strongly insisted upon the immanence of God. Instead of regarding revelation in this light as an alien thing, it is a nobler concept to conceive it as realising itself not merely alongside the development to which history bears witness, but actually constituting this very history as an integral element in revelation itself. The distinction between the prosaic and the poetic, between the lofty utterance of the prophet and the sordid bargaining of the designing court intriguer, remains; but in the inscrutable wisdom of God such distinctions are inherent in the full message of His revelation even as they are inevitable in the complex composition which issues as the sum of human life. God has taken many threads into the unity of his pattern for man's guidance and we distinguish the threads not by assigning various degrees to the Divine activities, but by recognising the manifold purposes that are conjoined in revelation.

It is necessary, for example, to know history as well as God if God is to stand revealed as the Overlord of history. It is necessary to know of sin and shame if God is to stand revealed as the Redeemer. The theory of degrees of inspiration is unnecessary and harmful. A conception of Divine revelation ranging over the wide field of human experience and capable of including the commonplace so that every phase of our being is irradiated with the presence of God is much more satisfying.

It has been stated clearly that this view of verbal inspiration, while free from the charge of being a

mechanical theory, is beset with difficulties. Difficulties, however, are of two kinds, those which are inherent in every system which recognises and acknowledges any kind of interference on the part of a personal God with the affairs of men for the latter's benefit, and those which are created by the attempt to define such interference after a particular manner. Too frequently difficulties of the former order are assumed to belong to the latter order. This caution requires to be kept in mind.

There is the difficulty of the growing knowledge of the race. This besets every view which regards revelation as complete. The demand that eternal verities shall be restated continually in view of advancing knowledge would demand a fresh revelation every few years. Some are bold enough to accept this conclusion, but they are bold in speech only. Modern revelations and even modern reconstructions of an existing revelation are frequently disappointing.

Help may be obtained in this difficulty by considering again the capacity for variation within limits which attaches to language. Knowledge grows indeed, but it carries with it as essential to its growth the true findings of the past. The result is that older statements are not always untrue, they are simply inadequate for the purposes of the newer investigations, but they hold an honoured place in the vocabulary of nations apart from the purpose of these newer investigations. The language of Scripture, it is admitted by all, shows a wonderful adaptability in the light of modern research. The explanation is found in the fact that

there are certain basal characteristics which always remain true and which are most clearly associated with the simplest observation of mankind.

Even if the connection between the earlier chapters of Genesis and certain ancient cosmologies could be much more firmly established than is possible in the present state of knowledge, the fact would only serve to throw into bolder relief the remarkable character at present under view. Heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, remain to-day perfectly accurate descriptions of the visible phenomena of the Universe. They will so remain so long as the structure of the human eye and the effect of light upon it continues as at present. The scientific view of the world may gather to itself an elaborate terminology, but, the power of vision being what it is in unalterable succession age after age, it is possible to disregard the language of science while leaving room for all its fresh additions to knowledge. The grass waves green before the eye of the ploughboy and the savant. With all the latter knows of its inner properties it is still green grass.

Let it be conceived—no very rash conception—that the directive activity of inspiration formulated thought in terms of that which is true and abiding and the simple language of the primitive age can convey the message of God in language suited to the simple mind and yet correspondent to the perception of the most enlightened. Here also that broad base of revelation which includes in its comprehensiveness all the varied experiences of humanity helps to remove that meticulous pedantry

which is a distressing feature of the present age. God had other men and other methods in view as well as the cultured darlings of an artificial time. The rough hunter, the wearied warrior, the toiling husbandman must not be robbed of the message of the Eternal because a few *litterati* demand a precision which in its very preciseness would but serve to crystallise error. In the under region of sense-perception where all men meet there is room for the plain people of the earth, and it is in the language framed to record these primitive yet abiding experiences that God speaks to men.

And the wisdom of God in speaking His messages over long periods of time, here a little and there a little, seems also thus justified. Revelation grows with the growing knowledge of mankind and takes in a sufficiently wide sweep to include most diverse conditions. It moves amid the stir of war and also in the peaceful cultivation of the olive. It drops its message in the tent of the ancient patriarch and yet does not neglect the place where treaties are made and kingdoms rise and fall.

Its messengers are as diverse as the conditions it depicts. Kings, slaves, prophets, priests, herdsmen, women, warriors, all make their contribution. Complex civilisation demands a complex revelation and finds it ready to hand.

But the qualification in the view of inspiration frequently urged that it must be limited by the limits of the finite understanding raises the difficulty as to how far this limitation extends. The Old and New Testaments bear witness to the incapacity of man "to find out the Almighty to

perfection." God speaking through human lips in gracious condescension clothes His thoughts which are not as our thoughts in human formulæ. The difficulty is more formidable in theory than in practice. A practical limitation is found in intelligence itself. That which can be understood comes within the compass of finite understanding. That which cannot be understood is not a subject of the Divine revelation. If trope and figure carry men to the verge of the unknown, exhausting all that is comprehensible concerning God, then revelation has fulfilled its task. But within the limits of the finite the message of God must surely stand for the highest and the best. A wholly erroneous view of national development with hopeless anachronisms discoverable by the unaided wit of man seems sufficient to discredit the history which presents it. A book which is a mass of inaccuracies in its verifiable portions can scarcely command a lively assent in matters which are unverifiable by the ordinary methods of investigation. Fiction and parable it may be admitted can teach Divine truth, but they must teach it in the form of fiction and parable, and must not be obtruded on the mind masquerading as facts.

No apology drawn from the assumed sublimity of the ideas elsewhere found in a writing is sufficient to excuse blunders that ordinary care could avert. It serves as some justification of the personal characters of Eusebius, Lactantius and John Foxe, to urge that the standard of accuracy in their time was not as rigid as that now demanded, and that they had emerged from periods disfigured by

violent persecution ; but the charge of inaccuracy, in so far as it can be supported, diminishes the value of their contributions to history. It is with the result—that is, with the Book produced, and not primarily with the characters of the producers—that the reader of Sacred Scripture is concerned. A standard at least equal to the standard of reputable human writings seems to be imperatively demanded.

Impartial investigation is slowly coming to the opinion that the inspired record fulfils at least this minimum. The testimony of one who does not share the views of this article may be quoted. Writing in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* under the heading "Infallibility," Professor W. A. Curtis of Aberdeen says : " It is now a commonplace of Biblical learning that God has been at no pains to prevent errors of history and knowledge and defects in the text and its transmission from finding an entrance into the sacred pages of His written Word. The marvel is, in truth, that detected errors are so few. The devout reader of Scripture may indeed accept them as there, if not from accident, on purpose, to protect him from the sin of Bibliolatry, and to chasten the religious instinct which demands infallibility of a literal sort and insists on revelation as an *opus operatum* and in inspiration as a finished fact. Add together the sum of Biblical inaccuracies and flaws, and, while they do disprove the notion formed a priori of all Divine instruments, that the Book contains no blemish, the aggregate is so slight as to be practically negligible."

The remark seems obvious that if God were at no pains to prevent errors finding an entrance there must be some explanation of the fact that detected errors are so rare as to constitute a marvel and so unimportant as to be practically negligible in the aggregate. It seems more reasonable, instead of seeking an explanation outside the admitted phenomena, to suggest that the inspiration of God secured that the vehicle of utterance in the first place would be adequate to express His will and the providence of God safeguarded the message so that the chances of time did not seriously impair its accuracy.

Yet the difficulty would be far in a way towards solution if it could be maintained that all the alleged errors were merely verbal infelicities. Most of them occur, moreover, in instances where there is no marked difficulty in putting the thought suggested into words. It is "a harmonistic device" of very questionable value to suggest that a variation in number is the result of a conflict between thought and its expression in words. Various translations and variant readings due to the errors of copyists do not present an insuperable problem. There is a Divine economy in all miraculous interference. Granted that a special influence of God needed to be exercised in order to convey His will in human speech, once the Divine message has been given in any language it is within the power of man to render the message in another language.

Here is a situation calling for the exercise of Divine Providence rather than continuous miracle. It is conceded that the main burden of the message

has been preserved in every honest translation. The multiplication of readings has not been an unmixed evil. It has awakened the spirit of inquiry, induced a very close study of the sacred text, and, strange as it may appear, proved one of the chief factors in preserving a true reading, establishing it on firm ground against unworthy competitors. The element of freedom is as important as the element of Divine control, and variant readings are, so far, an illustration of freedom. There are three texts commonly in use, the Vulgate, the Received Text and the Revised Text. The Vulgate has been most hopelessly corrupted through the carelessness of mediæval scribes; the Received Text depends on a few MSS.; the Revised Text has been formed under the guidance of Westcott and Hort, and with the assistance of very modern critical apparatus. In all important matters there is essential agreement between the three. God has preserved His message once given by His Spirit.

Nor is there much difficulty in the varying accounts of Our Lord's words in the four Gospel narratives. In the case of the Synoptists there is sufficient agreement to demonstrate that the records depend upon some common source. There is enough difference to show that even here the operating intelligence of the evangelist was not passive but active, reproducing those features of Our Lord's discourse which quickened the recorder. The type of criticism which finds a problem in Matthew's omission of the words "it lacked moisture" in the parable of the Sower would

reduce the New Testament evangelists to the level of newspaper verbatim reporters. Thus those who begin by denying verbal inspiration end by involving themselves in a hopelessly mechanical form of word warfare.

The Gospel of St John moves in a different circle and offers a special phase of Our Lord's teaching. The utterances here are largely polemical. The agreement in style between the narrative portion and the incorporated sayings is remarkable but not unaccountable. If John pondered long on the sublime utterances of our Lord two results might be expected. The mould of his thought would be insensibly influenced by its content, adapting itself more and more to "the mind of Christ." Also the form of the utterances would blend with the constitution of John's mind and reappear as genuine reproductions of the sayings of Jesus yet owing something in character to the reproductive imagination. Inspiration is sufficiently great and sufficiently adapted to human characteristics to admit of all such modifications in the records of the Evangelists.

The message of God has been preserved in verbal form with substantial accuracy. The form of the Divine revelation is such that it has rendered the thoughtful reader independent of the accident of variant readings and occasional errors of copyists. God in His mercy, mindful of the frailty of all things human, has spoken often and variously to men so that one portion of Scripture supplies a necessary check and corrective to hasty deductions drawn from another portion. The substance

having been preserved intact, the minor discrepancies serve to excite our critical faculty and have resulted in deeper study of the whole. Yet it is essential that the existent book in any translation should be in a real sense the Word of God. The vast mass of mankind is dependent on translations for the apprehension of Divine truth. The original documents, those remarkable messages authenticated by apostolic signature or by their appearance in the days of the first century, have wholly disappeared. It is possible indeed to trace many of the mistakes in translation and quite definitely to assign their origin to faults of transmission or misjudgment of the import of a foreign word. Recent research has enabled men to recast the thought of the New Testament here and there in the light of the popular Hellenic culture proper to the period of its origin. The more daring flights of subjective criticism have been moderated through meeting with serious obstacles in historic facts.

But there remain two features which demand serious attention when taken in combination. No particular text or translation of the Sacred Scriptures is wholly free from error. Every honest text and translation contains the message of God in such purity that the errors scarcely dim its lustre and do not at all impair its life-giving quality. Such a result must be attributed to the directing providence of God and calls all men to praise Him. But if the Divine message is reproduced in various forms yet in living power, notwithstanding ascertainable minor errors, the question becomes

pertinent, May not inspiration itself exercise only such control over the minds of men as to secure the essentiality of the message? The problem is most perplexing from the speculative side, but is unimportant in practice because of the structure of Scripture and the nature of the discovered errors. If those alleged discrepancies which depend upon an a priori view of the history of Israel developed in obedience to a particular philosophy of religion be removed from view as demanding special treatment and as being as yet unproven, the remainder resolve themselves into possible misreading of numbers, misplacing of names and, in a few instances, of the order of events.

The common defence of such discrepancies is to attribute them to the mistakes of copyists. Many of them can with great plausibility be referred to this source for their origin. But the original documents have entirely disappeared and to that extent the theory lacks complete cogency. While revision of the text has removed some blunders, there are certain textual problems that obstinately remain notwithstanding the great increase of codices. Is it not better on the whole to preserve a humble attitude and confess that there are still questions unsolved? As we study closely the phenomenon of inspiration it appears as the activity of God upon men clothing the Divine ideas in human language. It is evident from the nature of revelation itself that man had to ascend under the Divine guidance by recognised stages to the full apprehension of truth. The Divine Lord found it necessary to say to His disciples: "I have many things to say unto

you, but ye cannot bear them now." There is the struggle of Divine truth with the obduracy and blindness of human sinfulness manifest in the slow process by which God unfolded to His people the treasures of His grace. In "the fulness of time" Jesus Christ true God and true man came and with Him the completeness of revelation.

It is not given to the inquirer adequately to establish the connection between error and sin. There may be an abiding intractability, corrected so as to reveal God, yet not wholly absent in the unessential but inevitable circumstances of revelation. If such should prove to be the case, what an amazing evidence of the love of God is afforded men in the original forthputting of Divine control which limited the area of error so as to make it innocuous and presided over the processes of time so that the original control designed to supply men with the very Word of God should never be defeated by the intrusion of the vicious principle into the area of vital concern.

But at present no message of the Divine puts a period to such questionings. The secret of the Divine dealing remains with God. It is instructive to observe that finally a sinless Being, One with the Father, became the medium of the Divine revelation. The dual nature of the Logos united and harmonised in a single Personality affords the most helpful illustration of the Word of God. It is not by accident that the same title belongs to the burden of revelation and to the Person Who is the culminating Fact in this process of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ establishes once for all the possibility

of a perfectly human thought exhibiting absolute harmony with the Divine purpose ; He set His seal to that sacred code which ages treasured as presenting the mind of God to men. Therefore alike the Sacred Scripture and He Who is the Subject of its eternal message are called the Word of God.

II

If the preceding discussion has elucidated the character of inspiration it must be conceded that inspiration is a direct activity of God, clothing His message in human speech, and employing human agents for that purpose. If this be so, then any collection of sacred literature either possesses that inherent quality due to the activity of God, or does not possess it. Lacking it, no authority can confer it, and possessing it, no authority can remove it.

The only question that can possibly remain is concerned with the process by which such inspiration discovers itself, and the grounds on which its scope is limited within the circle of the canonical Scriptures.

But a close examination of this problem reveals the fact that it presents itself under two forms. Very many of the difficulties which surround the subject under review have their origin in an unconscious confusion of two questions arising out of the two forms presented by the problem. These questions, although closely related, are essentially distinct.

It may be asked : " How has the authority of

certain writings so demonstrated itself that a certain section of the human race regard these writings as inspired ? ” An answer to this question may be supplied entirely different to that which would be offered by the people in question. For instance, in the case of the Koran, it may be conceded that the higher moral tone of the Mohammedan writings won for them acceptance and created an impression of inspiration, without yielding to the claim that they were produced by the direct revelation of God to Mohammed. This may for shortness be described as the abstract problem of authority.

The second question which may be asked is : “ What are the historic conditions under which the decision concerning inspiration manifests itself ? ” It is obvious that here the historic data, once ascertained, must govern the answer.

However much the findings of the past may be questioned, all matters connected with the historic development of a professedly Divine revelation are fixed in history. If these two questions be clearly distinguished much ambiguity will be avoided.

The abstract problem of authority is in itself a much wider question than the particular authority attached to the Sacred Scriptures, and is properly first considered.

A very little reflection is sufficient to show that the popular idea which conceives the State or the Church existing over against the individual as a separate entity, and exerting a purely external authority directly upon the individual as such, so that the relation can be defined as that of command

on the one hand, and simple obedience on the other, is wholly inadequate.

In order that any body of people may combine in obedience to particular dictates, there must be some underlying principle of unity. In the case of the State, submission is a tacit recognition of those gregarious tendencies in humanity which find their first expression in the development of the family. The inchoate sense of the necessity for co-operation and the realisation of vital needs which can only be satisfied by the existence of a community is the real principle which governs State development. Failing a rational interpretation of the principle of submission, the possibility of State control disappears ; but granted such an interpretation, it is comparatively easy to explain the abnormalities associated with it. The bond that unites the individual to the State and enables him to recognise in the external processes of government a means towards the realisation of his inner character is the possession of a common reason. Law on its penal side is warfare against the anti-socialism that arises from the elevation of an immediate individual desire over that higher development which is attainable only by the slow process of community intercourse and inter-relation.

Authority in the last analysis is not something purely external ; but, on the contrary, the explication of those controlling principles towards which the individual is implicitly striving and which find fuller expression in the ordered development of the State or a higher world of thought.

The Church represents that development through

which the individual realises himself as a member of the spiritual community. In the organisation of the State the common bond of reason makes cohesion possible. In the organisation of the Church, in addition to the common basis of revelation there is the continued activity of the living Spirit who dwells in fullness in the Head, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and also dwells in every true member. This continued activity of the Spirit controls the development and renders it more complete. Were every member of the State entirely subject to pure reason we should have a perfect State development: were every individual wholly subject to the influence of the Spirit we should have a perfect Church.

The history of the State and the history of visible Churches afford sufficient evidence that this halcyon condition has not yet been attained. So far as the Church is a human institution, it displays grave divergence from its ideal. Even the eternal community, known to God, and exhibiting His purpose, is still remote in its earthly part from its final state of perfection. Much more therefore that mixed community in whose Councils, as our Articles assure us, there exist those who are not governed by the Spirit and Word of God.

If it be too hastily assumed that such a distinction destroys the value of the visible Church it is only necessary to remind the objector that the "powers that be" also are "ordained of God." In existing communities, whether of the Church or of the State, it most frequently happens that the community assists the individual and furnishes

him with a content of thought that would not be possible to his unaided powers. Sometimes, however, the individual having obtained all the assistance that the community can offer, adds thereto a contribution that carries the community itself forward in the march of development. The vision given to the few, being preserved in the body, becomes in time the heritage of the many. Any conception of authority which hinders this reciprocal action, and suppresses the activity of the individual in the interests of the community, or refuses to the community its due regard in the supposed interests of individual liberty, misses an important element in God's purposes for mankind. The first is the error of spurious Catholicity, the second is the error of so-called Modernism.

It is obvious that if the individual can secure the advancement of the community, and if, on the other hand, the community assists the individual in the apprehension of God's message, that message must be in a certain sense common to both, and in a certain sense superior to both.

God's Word is not identical with the Church, nor yet with the individual; but the possibility of individuals forming themselves into a church arises from the fact that as individuals and a community they are informed by the Word of God.

The Word of God derives its authority, not from the imprimatur of a religious community, nor yet from the bare assertion based on the subjective experience of an individual, but because it constitutes in fact the organon through which both the

individual and the Church realise their spiritual destiny.

Roman apologists frequently urge the objection, "even if it be admitted that Holy Scripture is the Rule of Faith, it is obvious that it is not competent to exhibit itself as that Rule, and for that particular proposition an independent authority is required. That authority is found in the Church." This vicious line of reasoning involves a *regressus ad infinitum*. If Scripture be incompetent to exhibit itself as an authority, the same defect is inherent in the Church. The Romanist seeks to evade the difficulty by asserting that the Scriptures as historical documents declare that Our Lord Jesus Christ constituted the Church as such an authority. Ultimately the authority of the Church is made to depend on the Word of the Lord; but the very position claimed for the Scriptures is that they are the Word of the Lord. The logical base of authority is identical. There only remains the evidence in support of the competing claimants. The consciousness that God has spoken either through the Church, or through His Word carries with it the assumption that the Message received is authoritative. God is the ultimate Reality, the ultimate Truth, in the language of Carlyle "the Eternal Yea." Proof of propositions such as these, if by proof be meant bringing the ultimate under some wider generalisation, is, in the nature of the case, at once impossible and absurd. Finality is reached when the line of inquiry ends in God.

The position defined is that the authority of Scripture is of that ultimate nature which can

indeed be made manifest to the conscience, and, like faith, can be discerned by its fruits, but cannot be made the subject of formal propositions and franked by superior external attestation. Reason and revelation are two streams issuing from the Eternal Fountain and owe their position to the fact that they contain in themselves the character of the Eternal Fountain from which they spring.

It is not a valid objection to urge that all men are governed by reason, but all do not yield obedience to revelation.

The principle of reason is the condition of all rational development, but the development itself is far from uniform. The principle of morality lies at the base of revelation, but its development exhibits the same lack of uniformity. Reason and morality coalesce. Revelation is subject only to those hindrances which check the progress of righteousness. God's revelation is the apex of the moral pyramid. It is no matter of surprise that beings of inferior development find it difficult of comprehension and sometimes reject it in favour of lower conceptions.

That certain utterances are inspired is finally determined by their appeal to the conscience and their general moral influence. But, while this is recognised as the inevitable consequence of dependence on an ultimate, the principle can be employed without contradicting the verdict of experience. On the contrary, it becomes necessary for a full apprehension to enlist that verdict.

The Modernist would reduce the appeal to conscience to the narrow limits of the capacity for

appreciation by the individual man at a given moment of time. The Sophists in ancient Greece were the true predecessors of this type of Modernist. Man being the measure of all things, the private opinion of Thrasymachus was the last word on the universe. It is strange to find human thought returning in its cycle to this impossible position.

The Scriptures make their appeal to conscience, but conscience itself is developed by the appeal. It belongs to the very genius of inspiration to be at once the mentor of conscience and to depend for appraisal upon the fact that conscience exists. Conscience itself is not altogether an individual possession. A large portion of morality may be said to be absorbed from institutions and customs that owe their origin and expansion to precedent moral consciousnesses. At the same time every existent individual presents himself as an embodiment of the history of the past in a definite moral consciousness and as capable to some extent of modifying that history by the process of individual reaction.

Knowledge has grown from more to more and moral knowledge forms no exception to the rule.

To permit a single individual to call a halt at any stage and to exclude from the future heritage of mankind that which seemed to him incompatible with righteousness or simply incomprehensible would be to stereotype a particular attainment. It would make the individual man the measure of revelation, and impose on God that limitation which was merely incidental to progress. But how then can conscience recognise the voice of God,

seeing His ways are not as our ways nor His thoughts as our thoughts? The answer is found by distinguishing between the positive and negative aspects of the problem. The recognition of moral unworthiness through the presentation of a higher ideal invests the message that awakens it with immediate authority. But, on the other hand, the moment conscience elects to assume a position of moral superiority and to form an unfavourable judgment the possibility of imperfection owing to undeveloped moral sense must most seriously be taken into account. The ancient Gnostics furnish an illustration of this attitude of conscience and the necessity for a wise discrimination. Marcion presumed to excise large portions of the New Testament under the influence of a perverted moral sense.

In addition allowance must be made for the general reference of the message designed to raise very varying peoples to the heights of moral attainment from which they may see the vision of God. Particular portions of Scripture may have afforded genuine footholds to the adventurers after truth without which the sublimer heights could not at all have been climbed. It is further evident that even when the individual conscience bows before a truth as the highest yet presented to experience it does not follow as an immediate consequence that the individual grasps at once the highest meaning of his source. The long history of interpretation serves as a warning against a too ready acquiescence in first ventures of knowledge. The right of private judgment must not be degraded

into the privilege of glorifying individual eccentricities. The progress of consciences stimulated by the Word of God passes from age to age and finds expression in the formulations of the past. The great creeds of Christendom cannot be lightly cast aside. They represent a measure of spiritual attainment possible only by the continued contribution of earnest seekers after God. The broad highway of interpretation beaten out by the feet of countless travellers is the contribution that the past makes to the present. Wise people do not despise the assistance of a road because they happen to live after it has been built.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the view of Divine truths above indicated is set out with clearness in the Gospel records and in the Epistles. It is recorded of our Blessed Lord that "He taught them as One having authority and not as the Scribes." The "authority" could not have been of any external character, because Our Lord never received an ecclesiastical imprimatur, but, on the contrary, was subsequently definitely rejected by the religious leaders of His time. A key to the explanation is found in the position taken by the Fourth Gospel, where Our Lord is represented as appealing to His word (v. 24) and His works (v. 36) as the real witnesses to His true position. There is a further profound suggestion of the consonance of one portion of revelation with another in the subsequent saying: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words" (v. 46, 47). In the Epistles it is sufficient

to refer to the Thessalonians who received the message "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13), and to the subtle analysis of all true apprehension in the Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ii. 11-16). The need of a connecting link and the supply of that link by the operation of the Spirit of God creating a spiritual capacity for a spiritual reception establishes on a firm foundation the position of a direct consciousness of the spiritual supremacy of God's Word.

But the difficulties of interpretation and the historic problems connected with the fixing of the precise limits of inspired teaching have created a school of interpreters at the opposite pole from the Modernist position just discussed. A strong section, including many who reject the Roman solution of a living, speaking, Infallible Judge, speaks frequently of "the voice of the Church" as a final arbitrator in all controversies, to which unquestioning obedience must be rendered. As it affects the present discussion this view finds expression in the assertion that "the Church was before the Bible." The most elementary analysis suffices to expose a host of ambiguities resident in that short sentence. Two deserve careful notice. What is meant by "the Church"? By an unconscious subreption those who make the Bible depend for its authority on the Church substitute the existing body of recognised teachers or the decisions of the continuous community for the scattered companies of early believers to whom alone the statement has any

measure of applicability. Again, what is meant by "the Bible"? By a similar unconscious subreption the collection of a series of sacred books into one volume is identified with the conception of the Bible as the Word of God. Suppose that the statement be cleared of these ambiguities it would read: "There were small companies of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ before the collection of writings which subsequent believers revered as the Word of God had been completed." It is difficult to see the relevancy of the argument when put in this comparatively unambiguous form.

Why did subsequent believers reverence certain writings as the Word of God? Because they recognised in them the primitive message which led their predecessors to faith and found in them the same operative power of awakening faith. The statement "the Church was before the Bible" leaves wholly untouched the relation of the Church to the Bible. But it is sometimes urged "the Bible originated in the Church." It is not, however, permissible to treat this phrase as identical with "the Bible had its origin from the Church." John Locke was an English country gentleman, therefore *An Essay on the Human Understanding* originated in the company of English country gentlemen. But English country gentlemen have not given authority to John Locke's *Essay*, and no one has thought it necessary to propound the aphorism, "English country gentlemen to teach and John Locke to prove." It is as absurd to elevate environment into the commanding position of authority in the case of the Bible as it would be in the case of John

Locke. The statement that the Bible originated in the Church as in a suitable environment requires serious modification. Much of the New Testament is devoted to the attempt to check serious abuses existing in the early Christian communities. Nothing but the exigencies of a theory can account for the startling assertion that the Epistle to the Galatians, for example, originated in the Galatian Church. The assumption of a "Catholic" body giving form to the Epistles in contradistinction to local communities that required the rebukes contained in them must be dismissed as a pious abstraction, natural to some minds, but altogether unhistorical. To say that the Apostles represented the Church and the Bible originated with them ignores the important phenomenon of writers not numbered among the Apostles and, if this error be corrected, amounts to the illuminating proposition: "The writers of the New Testament wrote the New Testament and claimed authority for it." If it be urged that in all this discussion the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church is either ignored or denied, the answer must be that the question is not concerned with the fact of the guidance of the Divine Spirit in the Church, but with the actual means the Spirit employed in order to guide. The one theory assumes a general operation issuing in an authorised code franked somehow by the community. The other theory admits a difference of function in the Holy Spirit and regards one of His functions as consisting in a direct operation on the hearts and minds of chosen men with the result that their utterances were received

as the Word of God, and witness was borne to this fact by the company of believers. The confusion of thought seems to be between recognition of authority and authority itself. The Church recognised the Sacred Scriptures as being God's message to man and published abroad its conviction. But that conviction could only find a sound base in the inherent power of the Scriptures themselves.

The ground is now cleared for the investigation of the second question concerning the historic conditions under which the decision with regard to inspiration manifests itself, or, in other words, the grounds on which its scope is limited within the circle of canonical Scripture.

A company of people emerge in history possessing a sacred literature. The claims they make for that literature are so lofty that they require to be settled by an appeal to fundamental authority. The emergence of the literature itself and the precise conditions that first awakened reverence for it are to some extent on a different footing. The Mohammedan believes the Koran to be Divine. Christians do not. The historic circumstances of its origin are unaffected by these differing attitudes.

There is no occasion to review the evidence of the formation of the Christian Canon of Scripture. The writings of Bishop Westcott on that subject are available and supply the necessary material. All that is necessary is to determine the principle under the guidance of which the Canon has been formed. One element is persistently ignored which stands out prominently in all the ancient discussions. The Gospel message came at first with the

authority of an individual. Our Lord spoke with authority. His words were accepted because they were the words of Jesus. The same phenomenon displays itself in the early Church. In the judgment of Paul's opponents his written messages were more powerful than his verbal utterances. "His letters," say they, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." Paul indeed denied the validity of this estimate so far as it concerned his actual presence, but did not question its justness in relation to his letters. By implication he confirmed it. In the formation of the Canon an important place must be assigned to those Scriptures which owed their acceptance to the fact that the first recipients had personal acquaintance with the authors and had already been persuaded of the spiritual value of their message which, when delivered verbally, they had received as the Word of God. The same feature is equally true of the Old Testament. Even the most destructive critic allows a nucleus of pronouncement to Moses and makes the authority of the assumed large accretions rest on the magic of his name. Apparently this original base for the canon is not acceptable to modern inquirers, who suggest very frequently something in the nature of a committee-room decision between the claims of rival contributors.

The attempt to weaken the direct personal testimony of recognised teachers is made to rest upon the following facts:—(1) there were several more or less imperfect gospel narratives at the beginning of the Christian era, as St Luke testifies;

(2) several erroneous and fanciful gospels saw the light, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus; (3) some writings now included in the Christian Canon were for a long time in a doubtful position, rejected by some, accepted by others; (4) some writings were given early authority, but were subsequently excluded from public reading and any place in the Canon. These are the facts and must be carefully distinguished from elaborate inferences obtained sometimes by filling up the gaps in early Church history with ingenious conjectures which are offered as indubitable realities.

Not one of these facts militates against the theory of immediate personal authority; indeed, rightly interpreted, they support it.

(1) The early Gospel narratives were the spontaneous productions of those who had heard the word of life from early preachers or the Lord Himself. They owed their acceptance to the fact that they embodied this preaching. They owed their supersession to the ampler and better attested narratives that qualified writers supplied. The fact that God supplied the Church with fuller narratives and that the earlier productions naturally perished is the best evidence that our present Gospels were designed for the whole human race. All written gospels depended on the original oral message. The four Gospels in the providence of God collected that message in its most complete form, and by sheer superiority ousted all others. It is a strange mentality that places God's providence in conflict with His revelation.

(2) The existence of spurious gospels is no

argument against the view outlined. It would be as true to suggest that the phenomenon of false prophecy in the Old Testament is a solid reason against admitting true prophecy. There is no *a priori* justification for the assumption that God must guard His message against all imitation. The facts of revelation show that He has not done so. There is no evidence that the spurious gospels ever gained credence amongst the well-instructed early Christians. They found their home among the mixed multitude that accompanied the true believers a certain way.

(3) The problem of the disputed books is a powerful argument in favour of the position advanced in this chapter. The ancient writers who discussed the point are practically unanimous in asserting that the rejection of these writings in certain quarters was due to uncertainty as to their authorship. It is not necessary to accept the verdict as to authorship given by the ancients in every case, but the fact that they urged uncertainty as a ground of doubt must be accepted as evidence of a lingering conception that at some period a personal guarantee was the ground of the inclusion of books in the Sacred Canon.

The appeal to apostolic tradition, often strangely urged on the flimsiest evidence, points in the same direction. Modern writers are not sufficiently alive to the varying degree of difficulty that attends the formation of an entirely new canon, on the one hand, and the inclusion of related writings in a canon partially formed. Granted the existence of a personal guarantee in the testimony of a living

teacher, and, in addition, that internal proof of a Divine character which created faith alike in the message and in the messenger, then the dignity of style and intrinsic worth of a related writing might be sufficient to secure for it a place beside the guaranteed message although its authorship was unknown. It would be a matter of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." On this ground the questioned books won their way to acceptance.

(4) Although certain writings were for a time publicly read, there is no evidence that these productions were regarded as on a level with the canonical Scriptures. The practice of reading epistles from one Church to another created a certain degree of confusion between writings of permanent authority and those of special interest at the period. Books like *The Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Didache* attained for a time a great vogue as religious manuals, and were also publicly read. But there is little or no evidence that their contents were employed for the establishment of doctrine or enforced with the sanctions attached to the books of the New Testament. Their exclusion from public reading is in itself a witness to the reverence attaching to the genuine writings of the apostolic age. The rule of excision was a salutary attempt to safeguard a position already adopted with regard to the Old and New Testaments and not a further restriction imposed upon the true Canon.

The position of the Old Testament had already been determined in the Jewish Church. The importance assigned to the Council of Jamnia by some modern writers is wholly undeserved. That

Council effected no change in the Jewish canon, nor is there any real evidence that it desired a change. At any rate the Bible of the early Church was the Bible of Our Lord. It is a mistake to believe that this Bible contained the Old Testament Apocrypha. But may not the modern conscience instructed in the old truth suggest a further restriction of the Canon or an extension on lines of a wholly new character? If by the modern conscience be meant the attitude of a particular individual, and particularly an individual who attaches undue importance to the value of his own researches or the researches of his contemporaries, there is no limit to what he may suggest. But if by the modern conscience is meant the general moral consensus of believing people it is wholly improbable that anything of the nature suggested will occur. Men of commanding genius have dominated the Church from time to time and contributed largely to her view of truth. No one of them found a place in the Canon. Modesty would suggest to modern giants that they too might fail. The Reformation was the greatest upheaval the Western Church experienced. It succeeded in displacing the early Fathers from the position of secondary authorities on interpretation that a too credulous age had assigned to them. It left the Canon of Scripture in a stronger position than before. No spiritual rival worthy of notice by the side of the Scriptures has as yet appeared in all the history of the past since Pentecost. This is a simple fact. When the formation of the Canon is considered closely it is found further to exhibit an inner principle of unity clearly

revealed in the New Testament books that compose it.

The consistent testimony of all the writers confirms the definite argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews that God completed His revelation in His Son. The New Testament writers had a limited function. It was reserved to them to publish to the world the full significance of Our Lord's work. When they had accomplished this task and made explicit the meaning of the Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Return of their Lord, and had further preserved the substance of His teaching while on earth, the circle of revelation was completed. The failure of any writing to win a place for itself beside the recognised books is in itself an eloquent testimony to the satisfactory manner in which this solemn duty had been performed. Eighteen hundred years of Christian experience presents a solid barrier against the hasty intrusion of untried moderns. Some of these considerations apply with almost equal force against hasty exclusion of a particular book. Moderns are at a disadvantage in point of time compared with the early Christians. The evidence of immediate origins in the apostolic age comes perforce from them and moderns are dependent on their testimony in this particular. Again there is not going to be a repetition of the Incarnation. The addition to the Old Testament canon occurred in close connection with the Advent of the Son of God. The forces operative then cannot be expected, ought not to be expected, to operate now. The historic preservation had been committed in the providence of God to

that period with its peculiar spiritual exaltation. To every time its own sacred duty. It seems ill advised to revise in the cold scepticism of a critical age the labours committed to the glowing period when there was, or shortly before had been, human contact with the Son of God's love. The accumulating testimony of ages acts as a corrective against hasty exclusion. Before a book that has commanded age-long reverence is excluded valid reasons for such a drastic step must be forthcoming. Men refuse to part with a precious heritage at the bidding of a dilettantism which is three parts artificial and one part immature. The subjective opinions of isolated scholars must not be permitted to weigh against the moral consensus still evident in devout souls. Lastly, it may be pointed out that the suppression of 2 Peter, to take the least attested book, would make no material difference to the character of the Canon. The objections of the Modernist school go very much further. The demand amounts to a practical reversal of the Christian consciousness of all ages. If what has been urged proves true, no single age is competent for so great a revolution.

VIII

THE SACRAMENTS: HOLY BAPTISM

REV. ARTHUR E. HUGHES

THE TWO WAYS

FOR every earnest seeker after the blessing and grace of God there is no more important question than, How is such blessing, such grace, to be received? Such an inquirer, unless he goes for the answer directly to the Word of God, may well be puzzled. For, apart from the vague replies of those who call him to observe the teaching and follow the example of Our Lord, or to reach salvation through service, or to join the Church, two distinct, definite and altogether different replies are given by those who know that these others are not God's way, and can never meet the need of the human soul.

One reply is the Evangelical or Spiritual. It tells of direct access to God through Christ Jesus, open to all, no man, no external rite or ceremony between. It may well be summed up in the "comfortable words" of our Communion Service. It bids the needy soul deal as directly with the Lord and Saviour as did the "woman that was a sinner" in Simon's house, or the dying robber on the cross. It tells that as when the Saviour died the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and the way opened

into the Holiest on Earth, so now for all the way to God through Christ stands open.

The other way is the Sacerdotal or Mechanical. Let us take the words of two representative teachers of this way.

Prebendary Sadler in *Church Doctrine — Bible Truth*: “God, in having ordained a ministry for the regular celebration of such things as the Sacraments, has established the principle that certain benefits, the results of Redemption, are to be looked for, *not directly from Himself*, but indirectly through the hands of those whom He has authorised to dispense them.”

The Rev. Vernon Staley in *The Catholic Religion*: “There never has been a Church without a Bishop, and there never can be.” “The Bishops, and the Bishops only, have power to perpetuate the ministry in its various grades. They do this by handing on the authority received from Christ through the Apostolic succession.” “The Sacraments can be duly celebrated only by those who have been authorised by Christ, that is, by the Apostles and their successors. Unless the Sacraments are ministered by properly qualified persons, there is no security that they convey grace.” “There is no guarantee that such words, *I baptize thee, This is my body, This is my blood, I absolve thee*, would effect what they mean, unless used by competent persons, that is to say, by the Bishops and those sent by them.” “The streams of grace flow in the Church through the Sacraments.”

To these may be added words of the late Bishop of Zanzibar: “God has bidden us to invite men

to His Heart by the way of the Sacraments that a Catholic ministry alone can offer."

A correspondent in a Church newspaper writes: "Nor does the question of the recipient's disposition affect the intrinsic spiritual virtue of the Sacrament, which is effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although the spiritual meaning of the outward sign may not be appreciated or realised at the moment of Baptism. The New Testament refuses to allow us to contemplate any other beginning of the Christian life than that of our incorporation into Christ, through the Visible Church, by Baptism."

Clearly put, this way may be described thus:

God's grace only reaches men as conveyed by Sacraments, in which are included Confirmation and "the Sacrament of Penance."

Sacraments are only valid, are only real Sacraments, such as convey grace, if administered by a priest.

A minister is only a priest if ordained to that office by a bishop.

A bishop is only a bishop if consecrated such by a previous bishop.

This succession of bishops must have come down by one such consecration after another from those so consecrated by the Apostles themselves to succeed them in their office.

Forgiveness of sin, salvation, eternal life and all spiritual blessings are thus made absolutely dependent upon certain external acts, the external reception of sacraments from a priest, externally ordained by a bishop, linked by perhaps a

hundred external acts of consecration with the Apostles, and through them with Christ. Surely this is a long route for grace to take on its way from Jesus Christ, or for the right to administer that grace to take, before it reaches sinful men in this twentieth century. And by this theory the truest saint on earth is no Christian unless his Christianity reaches him through bishop and priest.

Ministers and sacraments are God's gifts to His Church. We highly value them for the purposes for which they were intended. But it is possible for a God-given help to be turned into a hindrance. It is so when a divinely appointed ordinance is regarded as something which it is not. Men may thus be drawn away from the true way of approach to God, as happened amongst the Galatian converts to whom the Apostle wrote: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Carefully examined, this mechanical theory breaks down at point after point:

(1) The grace of absolution from sins is regarded as coming through "the Sacrament of Penance"—*i.e.* the absolution uttered by the priest in the private confessional. According to our Church this is no sacrament, and, as is shown in another essay in this book, neither Holy Scripture nor our Church, which takes Holy Scripture for its rule and guide, give the minister the office of a judicial confessor.

(2) As will be brought out in this essay and the next, sacraments are not *ipso facto* vehicles of grace.

(3) There is not a word in Holy Scripture to lead us to suppose that a sacrament is only such if

ministered by a man episcopally ordained. For the sake of order, in our own Church the ministering of sacraments is confined to such men. But a sacrament ministered by a Nonconformist minister, or by a layman, is no less a sacrament.

(4) Neither Scripture nor our own Church regard the Christian minister as a priest in the sacrificial sense. The teaching of the New Testament and of Gospel truth contradict such an idea. The minister's position in the Church is one of order, for teaching and administration. It is not one of nearer approach to God than that of others for the imparting to them of a grace confined to the acts of the minister.

(5) It is extremely doubtful if any living bishop can be certain that in no single link has the chain between him and the Apostles been broken. And such uncertainty does not signify.

(6) The Apostles occupied a unique office, and in it had no successors.

The word *Apostle* in the New Testament is usually confined to the twelve, with the addition of Matthias, (perhaps mistakenly) put in the room of Judas, and the Apostle Paul. The Episcopate arose in quite early times, not with the object of making the Apostles' office permanent, but out of the separation of the presiding presbyters or elders into a distinct order.

The breakdown of the mechanical theory in so many ways does not concern the man who knows in personal experience the privilege and joy of direct personal access to his Lord.

To be clear on this fundamental truth prevents

him from giving a wrong value, or assigning a wrong place, to the divinely appointed Sacraments.

SACRAMENTS

It behoves us here to ask what a Sacrament is, and to consider the positive answer, before we come to the consideration of the two Sacraments one by one. To this question we reply :

(1) “ *An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself.*” There are only two such, for of the outward signs in Confirmation and Ordination we cannot say, *ordained by Christ Himself.*

(2) *An expression of faith.* We express outwardly the faith that is in our hearts, and thus confess Christ before men, and the fact that we are His.

(3) *A seal and pledge of God's Covenant Promises.* This is a precious assurance to the man who fulfils the spiritual conditions required.

(4) *A means of grace.* This the Sacrament is, not mechanically, but as it works upon and assists the faith of the recipients.

(5) *A vow of allegiance.* Of this we are reminded by the word *Sacramentum*, the oath of allegiance to his captain taken by the Roman soldier. Taking the seals of God's Covenant, the visible marks of His ownership, we recognise and respond in whole-hearted allegiance to the claims they lay upon us.

THE NEW BIRTH

In this essay we are concerned with the commencement of spiritual life in the soul, for the

Sacrament of Baptism has reference to that. We are to study the relation between the external rite of Sacramental Baptism and the internal Spiritual Grace with which real Christian life begins.

A variety of words and terms are used in Holy Scripture to denote and describe the commencement of that life. Different aspects of it are brought out by the use of different words. The multiplicity of words used and descriptions given impresses upon us how radical is the change needed, and by God's grace experienced. And no wonder ; for Holy Scripture shows us man in his present condition as fallen, sinful, in God's sight dead. The simple believer, and the loyal churchman, can believe no other.

The leading words used, with some of the places of their use, are : *Conversion*, or *Turning*, Acts iii. 19 ; *Being Saved*, Acts xvi. 31 ; Titus iii. 5 ; *Passing out of death into life*, John v. 24 ; *New Birth*, or *Regeneration*, John i. 13 ; iii. 3, 5 ; Titus iii. 5 ; 1 Peter i. 3 ; *Renewing*, Titus iii. 5 ; *A New Creation*, 2 Cor. v. 17 ; *Adoption*, Eph. i. 5.

Of these the word that comes most before us in our study of the Sacrament of Baptism and its relation to the commencement of spiritual life is New Birth, or Regeneration. Some have sought to give to that word a lower meaning. Some have regarded it as merely the entrance into the Visible Church, others as the receiving of a "germ of life" which may lie dormant in a dead soul till a later experience of Conversion brings it into full life.

The Scripture texts quoted above prove at once that in Holy Scripture the meaning is the definite

commencement of spiritual life, the same as described by the other words, regarded from a different aspect. The meaning of our Church is no less clear. We pray "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration," and the necessity of *regeneration* for entering the Kingdom of Heaven is mentioned as taught by our Lord (John iii.). The whole idea of "a germ of spiritual life" is foreign to Scripture truth, Prayer Book ideas, and the Gospel way.

We need especially to be on our guard against the idea that Regeneration deals only with original sin, not with actual deeds of sin. A dangerous proposal is that, in the prayer, "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration," the word *sin* should in the Revised Prayer Book be substituted for *sins*. The evident intention is that original sin is dealt with by Regeneration, which those who make the proposal tie to the Sacrament of Baptism, while sins are dealt with by the Ministry of Absolution in the Confessional. It is true that those who have been born from above have often to confess their sins as children to their Heavenly Father. But as to penalty, the remission of all sins became theirs when at their new creation old things passed away, and all things became new. Then they stepped, like the first-born of Israel that Passover night, under the blood. There they remain. In Christ there is no condemnation. The prayer in the Confirmation Service, assuming the Confirmation candidates to be what they profess to be, well says: *Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the*

Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.

The words used for the commencement of spiritual life, and the Scripture texts mentioned above, set that experience before us as the work of the Holy Spirit, as the entrance into the new relationship of children to God the Father, and as the forming of a union with God the Son: *He that hath the Son ; If any man be in Christ.*

THE WAY OF SALVATION

It is all-important now to consider the conditions on the human side for the reception and experience of such a blessing.

On the Day of Pentecost the cry rose from thousands of seeking sinners, *What shall we do?* The first word in the reply was, *Repent.* *Repentance* ever stands forth as the first essential. In the Acts and Epistles it is emphasised again and again. Where in dealing with an inquirer, as in Acts xvi. 32, it was not mentioned, that was because the presence of it was manifest, and the Apostle could pass on to a further stage.

Yet Repentance of itself is insufficient. There is something utterly inadequate and lacking in such a recent expression of " Liberal Evangelicalism " as :

" God forgives sin by making the sinner better. Repentance involves conversion. It is a change of feeling which alters both thought and will. . . . There arises a truer sense of values and duties, of what is worth doing and of what we ought to do. The

man . . . gets strength for the effort. The sense of power gives him the feeling of religious 'peace.' . . . The man is 'a better man.'"

Surely the experience of multitudes is that while repentance and the turning of the mind in a new direction are essential, something much more is needed for the dealing with past sins and present weakness, the flesh within and temptations without. The statement just quoted omits the very heart of the Gospel. It omits that Union with Christ brought out in the Scriptures mentioned above. It omits that dealing with sin's guilt on the Cross, when He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made right with God in Him. It omits that essential relationship, *in Christ* the Crucified and Risen One, *in Christ* for pardon and justification, for life and power.

But another essay in this book has dealt with the Atonement, the one and only ground of the sinner's pardon and peace, that which has made such blessings possible for sinful men. Our question now is how the repenting sinner may obtain the fruits of Redemption, the Life won at Calvary, for himself.

The reply is so important, and the misunderstandings so frequent, that we gather together numerous inspired answers, first Our Lord's own words, then words from the Acts, and then from the Epistles:

John iii. 14, 15: *The Son of man must be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.* This was our Lord's explanation to Nicodemus how on the human side the New

Birth, of which He had spoken as being on the Divine side *from above and of water and the Spirit*, and the consequent New Life, might be his.

Acts ii. 38: *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*

Acts iii. 19: *Be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

Acts x. 43: *Through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Acts xiii. 39: *By him all that believe are justified from all things.*

Acts xvi. 31: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

Acts xix. 4, 5: *That they should believe on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Acts xxii. 16: *Be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Romans v. 1: *Being justified by faith.*

Galatians iii. 26, 27: *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

Ephesians ii. 8, R.V.: *By grace have ye been saved through faith.*

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM: MAN'S SIDE

In some of these passages faith in the Lord Jesus is set forth for repenting sinners as the step into life, in some Baptism, and in some both faith and Baptism. Now it is not possible to believe that one God could have provided two independent ways into life, and that some souls could enter by

one, and others by the other. The true explanation surely lies, as is well brought out in Canon Aitken's little book on *The True Doctrine of Baptism*, in bringing the two together. To do so is in perfect keeping with Matt. xxviii. 19, *make disciples, baptizing them*, with Mark xvi. 16, *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, and with Acts viii. 12, *when they believed, they were baptized*.

The two were so closely connected that it mattered little which an Apostle called for. Faith in Christ would be sure to find its expression in Baptism. Baptism would as surely imply the presence of faith. And of that faith it is the outward expression.

The twofold apostolic setting forth of the One Way of Salvation is often illustrated during a Mission to-day. A penitent sinner is met with. He received the Sacrament of Baptism as a child, and that is not repeated. But a Decision Card is given him. He is invited to *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, or to *Sign this Card*. There is no contradiction between the two. No one would regard them as separate and independent ways into peace. The latter includes the former, carrying with it a definite expression of faith, by which faith often becomes more simple and more definite. The signing may also become an open confession of Christ, which is the duty of every believer. Just so in the Apostles' days the call to converts from Judaism or Heathendom was sometimes *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*, sometimes *Arise, and be baptized*. But the call was one. No mechanical act can make Jesus Christ man's own. But faith in the

heart found in Baptism its divinely appointed expression.

As in the acceptance of the Baptism of John a man expressed his Repentance, so in Christian Baptism he expressed his faith in Christ. He was baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xix. 5), and into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19). By this simple act he expressed faith in the Crucified Jesus as the Atonement for sin. He also expressed entrance into a similar relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, faith in the Deity of Christ, and a firm acceptance of the great facts afterwards embodied in the Christian Creed, and all that results from them. It is little wonder that such faith involved of old a clean break with unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. The simple act accomplished, the man had acknowledged himself a believer in Christ, and was received a member of the Visible Church (Acts ii. 41).

It is not enough for one entering the army to enlist in the quiet and seclusion of a recruiting office. He puts on the king's uniform. Thus he expresses openly what took place privately. So, in the will of God, faith in the heart and its expression in Baptism should go together. We see the latter. It should be an evidence to us of the presence of the former, which we do not see. In our own Baptismal Service the faith and allegiance of the heart is still further confessed in the replies to the three baptismal questions.

It is Christ Who saves and gives life. But it is faith that lays hold of Christ. And Baptism

expresses that faith. The individual act and reception of Baptism expresses the individual exercise of that faith. In this on the man's side lies the significance of coming to Baptism.

We have so far had in our minds the Baptism of adults, and leave till farther on in this essay the subject of Infant Baptism.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM : GOD'S SIDE

In the Sacrament of Baptism man is a passive recipient. This reminds us that Baptism has a significance on God's side, as well as, and no less important than, that on man's side. But we have considered that on man's side first, partly because the Divine blessings signified only become real to man when the conditions on his side are fulfilled. We are now able to consider those Divine blessings :

(1) *Initiation*—the entrance upon a real relationship to God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost. It is a misfortune that in the Baptismal formula, both in the New Testament and Prayer Book, *eis* has been translated *in* instead of *into*. We are baptized into the name of—*i.e.* into a real personal relationship to—God. Those who have experienced the change signified have become members of Christ and children of God.

(2) *Cleansing*.—At their initiation into their office Aaron, his sons and the Levites were washed or sprinkled with water (Exod. xxix. 4 ; Num. viii. 7, 14). Washing, or baptizing, at initiation into office signifies the cleansing away of the past

when entering upon the new. To Israel God said : " Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you " (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). Such is the cleansing signified in Baptism. This was expressed in the words to Saul of Tarsus, Acts xxii. 16 : *Be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*

The spiritual cleansing is twofold. There is cleansing from a lifetime's guilt, including the stains left by every past sin. Such cleansing is through the blood shed at Calvary—*i.e.* the atoning death of Our Lord (Rev. i. 5 ; vii. 14 ; Col. i. 14). There is also the purifying of the heart and life brought before us in the further significance of Baptism as—

(3) *The entrance upon a new life.*—Two special figures are combined to illustrate this. There is that of burial and Resurrection. As, when immersion is practised, the man goes down under the water and rises again, so, when a sinner believes in the Saviour, as one with that Saviour in His death and burial he takes down to the grave the old life ; it is buried ; he rises a new man, to live a new life (Rom. vi. 4 ; Col. ii. 12).

It should perhaps be stated that while immersion, which is possible in warmer climates than our own, and is one of the methods mentioned in our Baptismal Service, is a beautiful illustration of the passing from the old to the new, it is by no means a necessity. The word for *baptize* used in the New Testament certainly does not imply immersion more than sprinkling. In such a passage as 1 Cor. x. 2 immersion could not have been in

the Apostle's mind. The method of administering the rite is far less important than the rite itself, and infinitely less important than the spiritual blessing signified.

The other figure used to set forth the entrance upon the new life is that of a New Birth. As in nature individual life commences with birth, so it is in grace. In act and figure the Sacrament of Baptism signifies the New Birth spoken of by Our Lord to Nicodemus. In the Catechism the inward and spiritual grace is described as *A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby (i.e. by the inward grace, not the outward sign) made the children of grace.*

The Sacrament of Baptism, individually administered, bears witness to the individual need for and experience of the New Birth. The old nature cannot be made holy, pure and good. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." There must be the new nature, the new life, the birth from above. As the sign of this is *individually* given, so the blessing signified must be *individually* received.

Thus in the Sacrament of Baptism we have a twofold significance. On man's side we have signified the faith of the penitent sinner. On God's side we have signified and sealed to such a believing sinner God's acceptance, cleansing, and entrance through a new birth into a new life.

The Sacrament of Baptism thus becomes the entrance or doorway into the Visible Church. For the Church assumes that the man's faith and God's gift, signified in Baptism, were both real. The

faith may have commenced before Baptism. If so, God's gift was received before Baptism. But in Baptism each found its formal expression. So in Baptism we formally "receive this person into the Congregation of Christ's flock."

In the New Testament the word *Baptism* is often used not for the mere sacramental rite, the baptism by water, but for the spiritual change signified, *the inward and spiritual grace*. Thus we read:

Romans vi. 4: *We were buried with him through baptism into death.*

I Cor. xii. 13: *In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.*

Col. ii. 12: *Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God.*

I Pet. iii. 21: *The like figure, even baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.*

It is the same in our Prayer Book. The one who replies to the questions in the Catechism is presumed to be one who, fulfilling the needful conditions, has received, not only the outward sign but (either at, or before or after the Sacramental Baptism) the inward grace. Such a one has in the external rite received the pledge and assurance of God's grace. But it was the spiritual change that made that grace real to him. And knowing the spiritual reality, the New Birth from above, the Baptism in the Spirit, and not only the water ministered by man, he can truly say, *my Baptism*,

wherein I was made a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

INFANT BAPTISM

We have so far confined our attention to the Sacrament of Baptism as administered to adults. We turn now to the case of infants.

At once there comes before us one of the most beautiful events in Christian family life, one which is indeed in keeping with one of the most beautiful stories in the records of Our Lord's ministry. Some mothers in Peræa wish for the very best for their little ones. They know what that best is. It is the Master's blessing. It is that they may be His, and grow up to follow Him. And so they gather round Him. They are undeterred by the rough words of the Disciples, who mistakenly think their Master too busy on more important work for His teaching to be interrupted for the sake of babies. The word rings forth: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.* He welcomes them, takes them up in His arms, lays His hand upon them, blesses them. There is the outward act, the spoken word. But with these He gives more than these, spiritual blessing.

So we gather outwardly round a font. But in heart we gather round the Saviour, Whose atoning sacrifice was offered for infants as well as for adults, Who by His Spirit stands in the midst. We bring our little ones to dedicate them to Him, and to receive the very best for them from Him. We bring them young, for we long that from their

earliest years they should be His. We want that in after years they should never remember a time when they did not love Him. We want that in after-life there should be no need for conscious conversion. And so we bring them to the "Friend for little children." We hear afresh the Divine offer and promise of covenant blessing. With the prayer of faith we claim for them that all that baptism signifies on man's side shall, as they come to years of knowledge, conscience and responsibility, be manifest in them, true renunciation of sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We also claim that all that baptism signifies on God's side shall be fulfilled in them, cleansing from sin, the new birth, and union with Himself. We remember how forgiveness and healing were granted to one of old by the Great Healer "when He saw their faith," the faith of those who brought him. With a faith like theirs we come. And then, just as in Israel covenant promises were sealed to unconscious babes in circumcision, and as in Peræa the Lord's blessing was sealed to little ones by His own hand and act, so there is given to ours the sign and seal of God's own grace, theirs indeed conditionally upon their subsequent repentance and faith, but that repentance and faith conditional upon our prayer and faith, and consecrated upbringing of our little ones for Him.

As that sign is given, each little child receives his or her *Christian* name. The surname speaks of natural birth, the family into which one is born. So the *Christian* name speaks of spiritual birth, tells that, where that birth is not only signified

but experienced, the child is born into the family of God. The sign of the cross is marked upon the infant brow, in token, and with the confident expectation of faith, that he or she shall fight manfully under the banner of the cross against sin, the world and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto life's end.

We attach no spiritual virtue to material water, but all to the Spirit of God. We do not believe that of necessity a spiritual change takes place the moment the water is applied. The Baptismal Service may be the visible ratification of what was sought in the hour of the child's birth. But we visibly express our faith, and we have the visible response. And, in faith that both on the human and on the Divine side in answer to prayer there is the reality behind the outward sign, that the grace of God will be manifest in the future life of the little one, the minister says : Seeing now, *i.e.* You can see for yourselves, you have before you the assurance both of the fulfilment of the conditions required in, and of the blessings received by, this child.

Like the other services of our Church, so the Baptismal Service is framed upon the assumption of the genuine faith and devotion of those who join in it. It is so with Morning and Evening Prayer, with the Communion, Marriage, Burial Services, etc. It would indeed be difficult to form a Prayer Book on any other assumption. This charitable assumption runs through the Baptismal Service, in regard to parents, godparents and child.

But we must guard against too prevalent error. Terrible harm is done when men build their hopes upon participation in an outward rite, become satisfied with themselves because they have been baptized, and so are proof against the most earnest of Gospel appeals. Neither the Bible nor the Prayer Book sanctions such false confidence. Simon Magus was baptized, yet had neither part nor lot in the things of Christ. The idea that water baptism brings life is fundamentally opposed to the principles of the reformers who composed the Book of Common Prayer. Like vaccination, baptism does not always take. There may be the water on the body, but no inward grace in the soul. The water is set apart for the *mystical*, not the actual, washing away of sin. If the water ensured spiritual regeneration, there would be no need to pray for that regeneration.

All is conditional upon the fulfilment of the necessary conditions. It is as when a feudal nobleman, a minor, inherited an estate, held on condition of homage being done to a king. His guardians or next of kin, while he was a minor, would do homage in his stead. But when the appointed age was reached the homage must be done by himself. If he refused, the property would be forfeited. Alas! how many have forfeited and failed to possess that which in baptism was assigned to them.

Archbishop Ussher wrote true and clear words :
“ As baptism administered to those of years is not effectual unless they believe, so we can make no comfortable use of our baptism administered in

our infancy until we believe. All the promises of grace were in my baptism estated upon me, and sealed up unto me on God's part : but then I come to have the profit and benefit of them when I come to understand what grant God in baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually lay hold on it by faith."

The baptism of a little child in intention, and often in act, is beautiful. Sometimes unhappily in practice it falls far short of the high ideal ; and that in two ways :

(1) Sometimes the parents and godparents who bring a little one are such as never at other times enter the House of Prayer. They come, it may be, because it is the custom, or because they imagine there is some charm in the rite, or because they wish their children to be better than themselves. But there is strange inconsistency as they make promises in the child's name which they themselves do not attempt to keep, of a renunciation, faith and obedience which they themselves reject.

(2) Baptisms are now nearly always practically private baptisms. The *open* expression of faith is thus largely lost, the sense of incorporation into the Visible Church is missing, and with it the connecting bond with the particular congregation.

Cannot these shortcomings to some extent be rectified ?

Would it be possible in many parishes—

(1) To arrange for a public Baptismal Service to be held one Sunday afternoon each month, which Church workers and other friends should be invited to attend ?

(2) Always to have a week's notice from parents who wish to bring their babes for baptism at this service?

(3) In every case to arrange for the minister to meet the parents and godparents in the home of the child on a day shortly before the baptism Sunday, when the meaning of baptism, and the responsibilities of those who bring their children to it, might be prayerfully considered?

THE SEQUEL TO INFANT BAPTISM

We believe with Article XXVII. that "The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Yet that baptism must not be regarded as an end in itself. It is rather a starting-point, a step to a further step. The responsibility of parents and sponsors has just commenced.

We are one with the Baptists in the dedication of their little ones by Christian parents to the Lord. We are one with them also in the need for an open personal confession of faith at an age when this can be made with full personal knowledge, and deliberate conviction and decision. We are one with them in that, when the Sacrament of Baptism has not been received before, this confession should be made in that sacrament. We are one with them in not repeating that sacrament in the case of those whose conversion was subsequent to an adult baptism (though they do repeat it in the case of those baptized as infants).

If the question be asked, *Wherein lies the main difference?* it is not to be found in Gospel truth, or in spiritual blessing, but in the outward sign. Like them we dedicate our babes to the Lord in infancy ; like them we look for the open confession in after years. The Baptists reserve till that confession the baptismal seal and pledge of God's covenant blessing. We give that seal and pledge at the dedication of the child, and do not repeat it. But in Confirmation we give an equal opportunity for the needed confession, no less solemn and no less blessed.

Joyful is the occasion when in that service the young believer comes forward. He comes as one who has already received the forgiveness of all his sins, who is already born from above. He comes to confess this, and to take his stand on the Lord's side. He comes for a threefold confirmation :

(1) He confirms the promises made in his name at his baptism. So doing, he pledges his allegiance to his Lord, for Whom he will fight, and Whom he will obey. The vows upon him are confirmed, made more firm, more binding upon him by his own personal and public declaration.

(2) In utter weakness he seeks, through surrender, faith and prayer, the confirming, strengthening, filling of the Holy Ghost. The laying on of the bishop's hands is an outward sign and pledge that the blessing is for him. Not for a moment does he think that the bishop can give the Holy Ghost, or that the outward act and the spiritual blessing must of necessity go together. The very words the bishop uses negative such an

idea. But none the less he cherishes the assurance given in Confirmation that whensoever, whether before, or during, or after the confirmation service, in surrender and faith he claims to be filled with the Spirit, that blessing is for him. Thus he seeks to be confirmed, made firm, made strong for the Christian life.

(3) But yet there is a third confirmation. He comes to be confirmed by the bishop. At his Baptism he was received a member of the Visible Church. Now by the bishop's act that membership is made more firm, more strong, more full. Henceforth he is in the inner circle of full church membership. He takes his place at the Table of his Lord. There again and again he confesses his faith in the crucified Redeemer. There again and again, like the sign of the cross in his baptism, the sacred symbols of the Saviour's dying love mark him as redeemed and owned. And there again and again he responds to that claim, and, renewing his baptismal allegiance, offers himself, his soul and body, a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to his Lord.

IX

THE SACRAMENTS: THE LORD'S SUPPER

REV. ARTHUR E. HUGHES

THE greatest event in all the history of man was that which took place at Calvary nearly nineteen centuries ago, when Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, died upon a Cross of shame. Upon that event depends all that sinful man most needs. In the words of the Apostle: "He who knew no sin became sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

" 'Twas great to call a world to birth,
'Twas greater to redeem."

Apart from the atoning death of Christ, His Incarnation, Life, Example, Teaching, Sympathy and wondrous Works would have availed us nothing. Therefore He saw fit to appoint a special reminder, which, in reminding us of His death and its supreme importance, should also assist us to enter into the innumerable benefits He hath obtained for us thereby.

The time He chose and the method He used in the institution of that memorial are peculiarly instructive. The greatest event in the annals of Israel was the deliverance both from the Destroyer when the first-born of Egypt were slain, and from the Egyptian bondage, by which a company of

slaves was transformed into an independent nation. That event was observed by every household year by year with praise and thanksgiving in the Paschal feast upon the Passover lamb.

A greater deliverance was to be wrought at Calvary, and, as the greater deliverance was to take the place of the former in the minds of men, so the memorial of it was to take the place of the memorial of the other. It was in the observance of the one memorial that the other was instituted. That took place the same night that Our Lord was betrayed, on the eve of the great work of man's Redemption.

The Master gathered the little company of the twelve chosen disciples together, apparently specially holding the feast the night before the usual time, for on the Passover Day itself He, the true Passover Lamb, was Himself to be offered. The usual ceremonial was observed. With the passing of the first cup round He said: "Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come."

The bitter herbs were reminiscent of Egyptian bondage. The lamb told of deliverance from that bondage. Taking up the unleavened bread the Master probably used the same formula which is in use to-day: "This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt." He gave thanks. *Ἐυχαιστίσας* certainly means *blessing God*, not *blessing the bread*. But breaking it and passing it round He added: "This is my body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of

me.” And as the Feast came to a close, and the time came for the passing round of the third cup, He said: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.”

How beautifully simple ! How strange that so much mystery and difficulty should have gathered round that which, as instituted, is simple enough for a child to understand !

Faithfully indeed the early believers carried out the directions of their Master. From Pentecost onward they observed “the breaking of bread.” It was a sacramental rite. Observed in their homes as the conclusion of an ordinary evening meal, it brought into ordinary daily life the memory of the death of their Master and Saviour, and it sanctified that life with the memory. Yet, though it was the memorial of His death, it was not as mourners that they partook of it. Their Lord had risen, was alive. The cross they remembered was an empty cross. The tomb they thought of was a broken tomb. To them the cross meant a finished work, an accepted sacrifice, a triumphant victory. And as they remembered it, by faith they entered into and partook more and more of the fruits won by it.

Before long, we gather from Acts xx., the Lord’s Supper, or Breaking of Bread, had come to be observed at the central meeting-place of each Christian community, and that on the evening of the Lord’s Day. This was apparently the custom till A.D. 110, when evening meetings were prohibited by an Edict of the Emperor Trajan. This was evidently the cause of the transfer of the

sacred Feast from evening to morning. But all was still in keeping with the divine institution.

History reveals a gradual change of thought and conception in regard to it, leading to a change of practice. There were four causes contributing to this:

(1) Language used by some of the early Christian Fathers, who had no idea of the construction that would be put upon their words.

The bread and wine were sometimes called *the body and blood of our Lord*, which they represent. "All the Fathers intended to say," says Waterland, "was that the elements, keeping their own nature and substance, not admitting a coalition with any other bodily substance, are symbolically or in mystical construction the body and blood of Christ, being appointed as such by Christ."

(2) The tendency among Jewish Christians to perpetuate something of what they had had in the old Dispensation of priesthood, ritual and sacrifice.

It is true that no foundation can be found in the New Testament for such resemblance. No priestly or sacerdotal ministry was instituted in the Christian Church. Though St Paul uses ten names in describing Christian ministers he never uses the word *ιερεὺς*—i.e. *priest*. Nothing can be clearer than the teaching in the Epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere that the complete priestly and sacrificial work of Our Lord had left no room for any further priesthood or sacrifice. To revert to the old Dispensation was indeed a retrograde step, and a denial of the full Gospel of Christ.

(3) The incoming into the Visible Church of

multitudes from heathendom, bringing with them many pagan ideas and practices.

High up on the hills which separate Lancashire from Yorkshire we look near its source upon some little stream. The water is so pure and clean we gladly drink thereof. But we follow that stream down. We pass one town after another with its mills and works upon the banks of that stream. Before the sea is reached how different the water has become, how contaminated with much that came not from its source. So with the teaching in the Christian Church. It was pure as it came from the lips of the Master, and from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It was not pure when holy water and holy candles, the adoration of relics and of the Cross, and many other heathen practices signifying heathen ideas, had poured into the Church. To bring in elaborate ceremonial and ritual, especially into the central Communion rite, no doubt made the Christian Religion more attractive to many who had had such ceremonial in other religions. But it was none the less a departure from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel.

(4) The tendency of sinful nature to substitute the material and external for the spiritual.

A religion of form and ceremony visible to the eye, of priestly absolution audible to the ear, of a local rather than a spiritual Divine Presence, of an offering in the Church here and now rather than an offering generations back and hundreds of miles away at Calvary, does not require the same faith, and therefore comes easier to natural man than that which is altogether spiritual.

Thus in time we find instead of a simple Feast with no ritual, no priest, no altar, no sacrifice, all these most prominent, with the belief that the bread after the Invocation of the Holy Ghost by the priest has become the very Body of the Lord, the adoration of that bread, and the offering of it as a real sacrifice to God. The very title had been changed. That which originally had been the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 2), the Breaking of Bread (Acts xx. 7), perhaps the Communion (1 Cor. x. 16), had become the Mass. The Divine purpose of commemoration, communion, fellowship and proclamation had given way to that of sacrifice. A precious Sacrament had been lost to the Christian Church. The dark ages had set in.

At length in God's mercy and providence a brighter day broke upon the Church. God's Word came to light, and that brought about the Reformation. John Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation, took his stand upon Holy Scripture. He tested everything by it. Amongst other things he found in it no foundation for the doctrines of transubstantiation, the priesthood of the ministry, the sacrifice of the altar. "Nothing," said he, "is more repulsive than that any priest, in celebrating, daily makes or consecrates the Body of Christ."

It was the same with Cranmer and his fellow-reformers. This was Cranmer's experience: "I was in that error of the real presence, as I was many years past in divers other errors: as of transubstantiation, of the sacrifice propitiatory of the priests in the mass, of pilgrimages, purgatory, pardons, and many other superstitions and errors

that came from Rome ; being brought up from my youth in them. But after it had pleased God to show unto me, by His holy Word, a more perfect knowledge of Him, by little and little I put away my former ignorance. And as God of His mercy gave me light, so through His grace I opened mine eyes to receive it, and did not wilfully repugn unto God, and remain in darkness."

He and others were led to the conclusion that the whole theory of Rome as to the Mass was wrong. " I have read the New Testament over seven times," said Bishop Latimer, " and I cannot find the Mass in it."

They found the Mass so contrary to truth and to the teaching of God's Word that it could not be improved. It had to be abolished. And in its place they restored to the Church of our land the Lord's Supper, as instituted by the Lord Himself. For more than a thousand years it had been buried and lost beneath a mass of superstition. At last it was recovered, and earnest souls were privileged to come to the Lord's Table in a Scriptural Service conducted in their own tongue.

The very name *The Lord's Supper* had disappeared. " What do ye call the Lord's Supper ? What new term is that ? " asked a bishop opposing the reformers. The reformers rightly took that Scriptural title and placed it as the first title of their Service, *The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper*. To this they added *Or Holy Communion*, taking the word of the Apostle Paul, implying the common participation of the disciples in the meal and the blessing it signified. With the

change of name there was an entire change of teaching and spirit. The Mass had culminated in the oblation of the consecrated elements for the sins of men. The service of the reformers culminated in the eating and drinking of those elements, the symbols and pledges of the Lord's redeeming love. And, just before the participation in those elements, there is the reminder of the finished sacrifice of the Redeemer offered once for all, and the prayer for minister and people alike that they, receiving the sacred memorials of that sacrifice, may by faith receive and appropriate to themselves its saving grace.

The settled convictions of those reformers found expression in the Prayer Book of 1552. That of 1549 was only a temporary compromise, wonderful when we recall from what its compilers had come, and yet far removed from the pure and simple and beautiful teaching of Holy Scripture. With growing light the semi-Roman features of the 1549 book, such as the word Altar, Auricular Confession, Chrism, Anointing, Reservation of the consecrated elements, Prayers for the Dead, and the Invocation of Saints could not be retained.

To give to their country and to hand down to posterity that which was pure and true and founded upon the Word of God—for this they lived, for this they toiled, for this they died. Our Communion Service is precious to us, as if written not with ink but with blood, the blood of faithful men of God, who, when faced with the stake, said with unhesitating voice: "We are not minded to turn." And so they died.

The Bishop of Norwich writes : “ I trust that the more men know the less inclined they will be to alter or supplement our Order of Holy Communion.” We agree.

With the Word of God open before us let us sum up *what we find the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be, and what it is not*. We will do so in the light that shines from that Upper Room in the Holy City, for what the Supper was when first instituted, that it is now, no more, no less. The one difference is the change from anticipation to memory of the Cross.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is—

(I) NOT THE OFFERING OF SACRIFICE, BUT THE
MEMORIAL OF SACRIFICE OFFERED

“ Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins : but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ; . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. . . . And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin ” (Heb. x. 11, 12, 14, 17, 18).

Truly it is a dishonour to our Lord to believe that any other sacrifice can be offered for the expiation of sins, either of the living or the dead. Such an idea denies the completeness of His atoning work, and robs His sacrifice of its absolute efficacy. It denies the truth of His dying word, “ *It is finished,*”

and the meaning of the Rent Veil and the way opened into the Holiest.

We do well to thank God for a scriptural Church, and a scriptural Communion Service. It is good that we should again and again repeat that "our Lord Jesus Christ made, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." It is good that we should often be reminded that, "To the end that *we should always remember* the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us; He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of His love, and *for a continual remembrance* of His death, to our great and endless comfort."

Well does the 15th Homily warn us: "We must take heed, lest of the memory it be made the sacrifice." An altar implies a sacrifice; a table implies a feast. In our churches we have the latter, not the former. To speak of the Communion Table as an Altar is to be both disloyal to the Church and untrue to the Word of God. The word *table* was adopted instead of *altar* when the Prayer Book of 1549 was replaced by that of 1552.

Every sinner needs a sacrifice; but he that knows the meaning of Calvary knows that he needs no sacrifice but the one offered there. He rests upon it, and it meets his need.

(2) NOT A MIRACLE, BUT A PARABLE

According to the Church of Rome at every Mass a miracle takes place. Though the accidents and appearance of the bread and wine remain unchanged, there has been transubstantiation, a change of substance. The bread is no longer bread, the wine no longer wine. Jesus Christ, in His body, soul and divinity, has taken the place of these and the Host is worshipped as being Christ Himself.

It is surely owing to the strange refusal to use the God-given faculties of reason and common sense that men are able thus to distinguish between accidents and substance, and to believe that, in spite of the testimony of their senses, that which has every sign of being bread is not bread.

But we are dealing particularly with Holy Scripture, and in it the Apostle Paul emphatically speaks of that which is eaten in the Holy Communion as bread (1 Cor. xi. 27). And if our Lord had intended a change of substance He would have used not the simple *is*, but a word implying *becomes*, as in the story of the water becoming wine (John ii. 9). Our own Church, by declaring that "the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, are in no wise partakers of Christ," denies belief in any material change in the elements.

The Anglo-Catholic theory is that of a localised presence of Christ in and under the form of bread and wine after their consecration. That would be also a miracle, and is also devoid of any scriptural warrant.

The simple *is* or *are* is used again and again in Scripture signifying *represents*. Thus we have, "I *am* the door," "I *am* the true vine," "Ye *are* the salt of the earth," "This cup *is* the new covenant in my blood." And with perfect and literal truth we ourselves make a like use of the word when, placing a finger on the map, we say, *This is London*, or on a photo, *This is my father*.

The idea of a material change would never have occurred to the disciples in the upper room. They could not have imagined identity of substance between the bread on the table and the body of the Lord reclining at the table. They were Easterns and Jews. To such, figurative language was commonplace, and most natural. We have already mentioned that at the beginning of the service in the Service-book for the Jewish Passover the words occur: "*This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.*" No one supposes that when the Jews use these words they mean that the bread in the dish before them is turned into the original unleavened bread that their ancestors ate when they came out of Egypt. It represents it. So in the Lord's Supper the bread represents Our Lord's body, and the wine His blood. The breaking of the bread represents that body slain, and the pouring out of the wine that blood shed. It is no miracle; but it is a parable. The material objects and the external acts have a spiritual meaning. They speak of our Saviour's death. They are outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace, ours through faith in that atoning death. In the upper room in outward

sign, just as previously in teaching (John vi.), He set forth His death as the sinner's life. The separate bread and wine; the separate mention of flesh and blood—each refers not to life but to death. In the discourse at Capernaum no direct reference can be found to the Sacrament of the Supper of our Lord. But both that discourse and the Communion feast, first in the upper room and now in our individual churches, refer to the same great central fact, the sacrifice of Our Lord's atoning death. And both teach the necessity of feeding by faith upon that sacrifice.

It is good that in our Church the words spoken to us as we receive the bread and wine take our thoughts straight away from the bread and wine to that which they signify : *The body which was given for thee, The blood which was shed for thee.* Everything directs our faith to the Cross, to Calvary.

(3) NOT A PLEADING BEFORE GOD, BUT A PROCLAMATION TO MAN

According to Scripture the whole purpose of the Communion feast is manward, not Godward. The Apostle's word, "Ye do shew the Lord's death," cannot possibly mean a showing to God.

Yet a widely prevalent view is (*a*) that Our Lord, like the High Priest of old when in the Holiest on the Day of Atonement, is now standing before the Throne of God, pleading the acceptance of His sacrifice, and (*b*) that the minister is a priest doing on earth the counterpart of this work; that he, by the presentation of the bread and wine, represents and ceremonially pleads the sacrifice of Christ.

This view finds expression in the wearing of the sacerdotal vestment, the chasuble which in the Church of Rome is always worn by the priest when offering the Mass, but not when simply administering the Communion; in the taking of the Eastward position, and in the effort to change the order in the central part of the Communion Service so as to connect directly the offering of praise, which now follows participation, with the sacred elements through its being placed between the consecration and participation.

It is impossible to find the slightest foundation for this theory in Holy Writ. Our Lord, Who has passed into the Holiest, is there represented as seated at the Father's right hand, never as standing pleading before the Throne, and that because when the sacrifice was offered on the Cross it was then presented and accepted once for all. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down* on the right hand of God." Never can the minister on earth re-present what has been accepted. God alone could offer, and God alone could accept. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.*

Both sacerdotal vestment and the minister's position with back to the people were done away with in our Church in 1552. Bishop Latimer had protested, "where you should preach the benefit of Christ's death to the people, you speak to the wall in a foreign tongue."

Some defend their use of the vestment, and their belief in the doctrine implied, by quoting the Ornaments' Rubric in our present Prayer Book.

It is sufficient here to say that such a use of that Rubric is wholly unwarranted, for the bishops who worded it would have absolutely forbidden the use of the vestment in the Communion Service in any of their churches.

It is well to remember that in our Communion Service when the word *oblations* is used in the Prayer for the Church Militant it refers most certainly to the offerings of the people viewed as devoted to other pious uses than alms for the poor and as offered to God, and in no way to the bread and wine. No one who reads Bishop Dowden's *Further Studies in the Prayer Book* can doubt this. And when the word *priest* is used of the minister it is simply an abbreviated form for *presbyter* or *elder*. The Church of England in her Homily declares: "We need no sacrificing priest." This shows that when the word *priest* was used of the minister in our Prayer Book no sacerdotal functions were connected with the title.

Important indeed is the teaching of the Apostle when he says, "*Ye do shew the Lord's death.*" The word *shew* might better be translated declare, proclaim, preach. Ten times in the New Testament it is translated *preach*, and twice *declare*. It implies the telling forth of good news, the preaching of a gospel. And the Lord's Supper is indeed that. Every communion feast is a Gospel sermon. It is the preaching to sinful men the glad tidings that for condemned sinners One has died, and that there is life through His death. Even to those who leave the Church before the Communion is administered the spread Table speaks of One who

died for them. We do not minister the sacrament to remind God of the death of Christ, but to remind ourselves and our fellow-men.

(4) NOT AN IDOL FOR ADORATION, BUT A FEAST
FOR PARTICIPATION

In the Church of Rome constant attendance at Mass is demanded, while participation is rare, and then only partial ; the bread is administered, but not the cup. The people come not to partake, but to adore. The wafer has become their god.

And among Anglo-Catholics the idea of a localised presence under the form of bread and wine has the same effect. Large congregations are present through the eleven o'clock Communion Service, but hardly any partake. The rest are there to worship. A revival of the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements is sought. Reservation of the elements is practised, and for this official sanction is being sought. The real purpose in the seeking of reservation is adoration. It is not the Communion of the Sick. No need exists for reservation for that purpose. Communicants have been bidden to make their hands a throne to receive their Lord, and, through the same materialistic conception, to receive the Communion not fasting has been represented as a sin, although the Lord gave it to His disciples after supper. Truly we need not look to India to find idolatry. It is in our midst.

The present Bishop of Exeter has well asked : " If my Saviour is in the pyx am I to think that He is also in the body of the man who has just taken the Holy Communion ? Am I to kneel as he

passes me ? ” The thought is revolting, and yet, to be consistent, the man who adores the wafer would have to think and act thus.

The last of the Rubrics following the Communion Service gives us the plain teaching of our own Church. “ No Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ’s natural Flesh and Blood.”

When Gardiner asserted that with the Prayer of Humble Access following the consecration of the elements, and with the words of Administration in the 1549 Prayer Book, he could use that book and still hold the doctrine of Transubstantiation and adore Christ’s flesh in the sacrament invisibly present, Cranmer saw the need of change. In the 1552 book the Words of Administration were altered, and the Prayer of Humble Access placed before the consecration of the elements. To go back, as is now proposed, to the 1549 order in the service would be indeed a retrograde step, one that must be most earnestly resisted.

Meantime the whole emphasis in Scripture is laid upon the Communion as a feast. There is no thought of any virtue through being present when not partaking of it. We go back to the first institution. All partook. So it is in our own service. There is no thought of non-communicating attendance.

In this we have the continuation of the parable of the Lord’s Supper. The broken bread and the poured-out wine speak to us of the sacrifice of Christ’s death. Laid upon the table they speak

to us of the provision made for our need. The required participation, and the very fact that food only benefits those who partake of it, tell us that the sacrifice and provision are not enough. The disciples took the bread, and then the cup, passed round to them. So we take the bread and the cup from the minister's hands. The "*Take ye, Eat ye, Drink ye,*" of the first institution, the "*Take this, Eat this, Drink this,*" of our own service, all point to the need by faith to lay hold of and make our very own the Saviour crucified for us. Apart from appropriating faith the blessings won for us at Calvary are not ours. But what a blessed assurance comes to us at each Communion feast! The Saviour gives Himself to those who truly believe.

The Communion is a feast at which host and guests are alike present. The Master Who presided in the upper room is Himself present, not indeed in the bread and wine, nor in His bodily presence, which is in heaven, but by the Holy Spirit He is there in the midst. He is there as host. The minister is but His servant, handing out His meal, and voicing the people's worship and his own. The Master has invited us there to meet Him, and it will be our loss if we fail to meet and commune with Him.

(5) NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR FAITH, BUT AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

The idea of a localised presence has led many to the notion that the partaking of the consecrated elements, especially if taken fasting, is bound to

bring them grace and blessing. They have regarded it as a charm, as, it may be, the sure means of their salvation. And too often the necessary conditions of repentance and faith, without which even the communion feast is vain and can bring no blessing, have been altogether lacking.

Our reformers were most anxious to bring home the needful conditions. We see this in the use of the Ten Commandments at the beginning of the service, and in much that follows. It is especially to be seen in the four Exhortations, three of which are too little known.

Faith and partaking of the Holy Communion are not two different ways of feeding upon Christ. The only way is faith. The Lord's Supper is indeed a means of grace. But it only is so in so far as it leads to faith and deeper faith in the Saviour and His Sacrifice, and to consecration and deeper consecration to that Saviour in return for His love. The only possible feeding on Christ is spiritual, not physical nor mechanical. For it corresponds with His own communion with the Father. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John vi. 57).

But the outward act, the partaking of the bread and wine, is a divinely appointed and a beautiful method for the outward expression of faith in the crucified Redeemer. In act the communicant says, as much as if the words were spoken, that as he takes the bread and wine and feeds upon them, so in his heart he by faith accepts for himself Christ in His atoning sacrifice, and depends upon Him. He acknowledges that he is a poor sinner unable

to save himself, but confesses that Christ crucified is his one hope, and that he belongs to Him. He openly takes his stand "on the Lord's side." In partaking of the bread and wine he confesses Christ before men. The Church to which he belongs, on the ground of his open confession of faith, regards him as a full member.

(6) NOT THE PROPERTY OF THE WORLD, BUT THE
PRIVILEGE OF THE CHILD OF GOD

There is such a thing as "eating and drinking unworthily." It is possible to partake of the bread and wine "not discerning the Lord's body," with none of that faith in the heart which the act implies, and no appropriation of that which the bread and wine signify, the Lord's sacrificial death.

The unbeliever, the rejecter of God's grace, has no part nor lot in the holy rite. It belongs not to him. It is the portion of God's children.

At the first Communion the Lord sat down *with His disciples*. It was to his fellow-Christians that the Apostle wrote: "*Ye* do shew the Lord's death." So it is to-day. There is a welcome for the lowliest disciple, the weakest believer. These are called to the Feast. The invitation is to all who are religiously and devoutly disposed. It is their privilege to come.

(7) NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE, BUT THE
OBLIGATION OF LOVE

Some matters are open for the individual to decide with his God, as he believes he is led, for his soul's profit.

There is the frequency of communion. Many value their weekly communion, and in this they are in keeping with primitive practice. Many find their monthly attendance most helpful. Scottish Presbyterians have their great quarterly Communion. But few English Churchmen, though attending more frequently, have valued the holy feast more than they.

There is also the time of day. Some love the freshness of the morning hour. Others find midday more convenient. For many there is no time like the evening. In this they follow the earliest believers. They are truly *orthodox*. For the Master administered the first Communion in the evening. And, except in special cases of physical weariness, Sabbath observance, if it is what it should be, will make the previous use of the day a good and helpful preparation for a profitable gathering at its close round the table of the Lord.

But one thing is not open for choice. *Regular* partaking of the bread and wine is a sacred obligation. The Master's word was: "*This do in remembrance of me: This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*" He knew the need. He knew how easy it would be for us to forget. And so in loving forethought, knowing how to help our infirmities, He laid it upon us as an obligation, yet an obligation binding with the cords of love.

It is indeed a command. And the Master said: "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" Gladly we obey. For we know that disobedience means loss, and obedience gain. Who can say how much his faith in the atoning death, and his communion

with his living Lord have been fostered and helped through *obedience to this command*? So, as in love the Master invites to His own table and His own feast, in love we accept the invitation and come.

(8) NOT A MYSTERY, BUT AN ILLUSTRATION OF A MYSTERY

Never in the New Testament is the term *mystery* applied to a sacrament.

The word has various meanings. Usually we mean by it something mysterious, obscure, or incomprehensible. There is nothing mysterious about the Lord's Supper. No mysterious change in the bread and wine takes place at the moment of consecration. They are simply set apart for a sacred use, to represent the broken body and the shed blood of our Redeemer.

The usual New Testament meaning of mystery is something which was hidden, but has been revealed and is now an open secret, something which could not have been found out apart from revelation, and which has still a superhuman element about it.

The Lord's Supper is no such mystery. There is a great mystery, our union with Christ, "Christ in you" (Col. i. 26, 27). That mystery passes our understanding; but we know it by revelation. And the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the simplest illustration of it.

We partake of food. It becomes part of ourselves, producing bone and flesh. So by faith we appropriate Christ. He becomes one with us, and we one with Him. The Lord's Supper sets before us

Christ Crucified, Christ the sacrifice for sin, as our spiritual food. Through faith we become one with Him as such. "*I am crucified with Christ*," said the Apostle. It is the same with the believer to-day. We are one with the crucified Christ. When He died at Calvary we died in Him. His death is reckoned as our death. And one with Christ crucified we live, crucified to that world which nailed Him to the Cross.

Holy Scripture carries on the thought of this union. We are one with Him, not only in His death, but in His resurrection and risen life. The Living Christ dwells in us.

In Eph. v. 32 there is connected with the word *mystery* the thought of similitude. The union between husband and wife is similar to that union which we know by revelation to exist between Christ and His Church.

Here we have light upon the use of the word in our Baptismal and Communion Services. In them it implies something figurative, a similitude. The bread and wine are *holy mysteries*—that is, they represent something which they themselves are not. There is a hidden meaning about them, not visible but realised by faith. So in Baptism water is sanctified, set apart to the mystical washing away of sin—that is, for its application to be a figure or representation of the washing away of sin. If the thought was that the water itself washes away sin, the word *mystical* would not have been used. But the water applied to the body tells of the work of the cleansing blood and the renewing Spirit for the soul.

(9) NOT A SIGN OF HUMAN WORTHINESS, BUT A
SEAL OF DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

Sometimes we hear the words, *I am not good enough to come*. What do those who speak thus mean? Is it that they are determined to remain in wilful sin, that they refuse to repent and accept the Saviour? If so, the Lord's Table is no place for them. But if they mean the burden of a soul knowing its guilt, feeling its unworthiness and truly penitent, for such a one the Saviour died, and for such a one the feast is spread. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." The very act of partaking of the bread and wine is a confession of sin as well as an expression of faith. It implies: "I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. Nothing can avail but Calvary. I lay my hand upon the Great Sinbearer. I claim His sacrifice for my guilt. I make Him my own."

The Lord's Table is for those who, knowing themselves and their need, say: "We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table."

For such the assurance received is unspeakably precious. They grasp the cup. It is the cup of the Covenant made through Christ's blood (1 Cor. xi. 25). They take the bread and wine. These are the pledges of His love.

Covenants and agreements are sealed. This makes the promise legal and secure. You fulfil

the condition, and you know the other party will be true to his word.

So it is with the marriage covenant. A ring does not of necessity make a woman a wife. She can place it on her finger without being married. But none the less the wife looks upon her ring, and it assures her that he who gave it to her will be true to the promise of which it is the seal and pledge.

So partaking of the bread and wine does not effect a union between the communicant and his Lord. But as he receives it he remembers the great promises of the new covenant made with him through the blood of Christ, the perfect blotting out of guilt, the secret of a holy life through the indwelling Christ, and close fellowship with his God (Heb. viii.)

That cup assures him that as he fulfils the conditions his union with Christ is real, and those promises are sure. What the blood effects, that the cup seals.

(10) NOT A WALL OF SEPARATION, BUT A BOND OF UNION

In the Lord's Supper we have a social meal. We partake individually, but we partake by the side of and share the same food with others. As the Apostle reminded the Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. x. 17), we partake of one loaf, we drink of one cup. The very word Holy Communion means joint participation in that which is common to all.

In an Eastern country eating together is perhaps the greatest possible sign of fellowship with one

another. In the upper room this was still further emphasised by our Lord not addressing individuals, but using the plural three times: "*Take ye, Eat ye, Drink ye.*" So when we address a number of communicants together we are following the divine example. And we are sure that what He did He did with a purpose. With the exercise of their individual faith in Him, He would also bring together in loving fellowship those who had often been in disagreement and strife among themselves.

ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS may well be written over every Communion Table. We gather, it may be, of varied race and position, at times of varied Christian denomination, but as guests of the same Host, as children of the same Father, as sharers in the same atoning sacrifice, as partakers of the same Spirit, as co-members of Christ. Happy is the fellowship at the same Holy Table. No less happy is it when the fellowship there expressed is as manifest in all the mutual dealings in life of fellow-communicants.

Let us ever remember that it is the *Lord's Table* to which we come. There we find the Lord's provision for the Lord's people. It is true that for Church of England members we have our own test, our own initiatory rite, whereby those who profess and are believed to have repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ enter into full Church Membership. That is Confirmation. Other bodies have their corresponding tests. The Church Rubric cannot rightly be interpreted to exclude from the Lord's feast those who have passed such corresponding test, and give evidence that they

are truly the Lord's. The Invitation according to our Church is to *all who are religiously and devoutly disposed*. God forbid that we should ever shut away from His Table anyone whom the Master invites !

But our Communion with others goes beyond the limits of the walls or borders of our own Church. Deeply we prize our own beautiful Service. The Evangelical Churchman clings to it with all his heart. He realises that it cannot be excelled. Yet other Evangelical Christian churches have their own methods of administration, some of them very beautiful and very Scriptural. Theirs is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper no less than ours.

For our own Church it has been thought well for the sake of order that the administration should be limited to men specially ordained for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. But the rules of other churches can be left to those churches. And we rejoice to know that many in other bodies are fellow-communicants with ourselves, and in their hearts have the same faith and feed upon the same spiritual food. We have no sympathy with a narrow theology which makes the validity of a sacrament and the blessing to be found through it dependent upon administration through ministers ordained by bishops of an apostolical succession. *All One in Christ Jesus* effects a unity far deeper than anything mere ecclesiastical uniformity can create.

It is true that in one way the Lord's Supper has a separating power. A congregation divides. Some

remain to express their faith in the Lord and His atoning sacrifice. Others by constant withdrawal and absence from the Feast no less express that they have no such faith, and so no part in Christ. But the Supper is intended to unite, and does unite, all sinners who trust in the one same Saviour.

(II) NOT A PERMANENT INSTITUTION, BUT A
TEMPORARY ORDINANCE

It is precious ; it is needed ; but only for a time. " Ye do shew forth the Lord's death *till He come.*" It links us with the past, but also with the future. There was the Supper in the Upper Room ; there will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Our communion feasts are links in the chain which connects the two.

" And so that dark betrayal night
With the last Advent we unite
In one bright chain of holy rite,
Until He come."

We do well to look forward. The day is coming when we shall no longer need our sacred memorial. For, when we see Him as He is, who will forget that we owe our all to Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ?

The memorial feast is a precious and happy foretaste of that coming day. The look back brings peace ; the look forward brings joy. Miss Havergal knew something of that joy when she wrote :

“ Sit down beneath His shadow,
 And rest with great delight ;
 The faith that now beholds Him
 Is pledge of future sight.

Our Master’s love remember,
 Exceeding great and free ;
 Lift up thy heart in gladness,
 For He remembers thee.

A little while, though parted,
 Remember, wait, and love,
 Until He comes in glory,
 Until we meet above ;

Till in the Father’s kingdom
 The heavenly feast is spread,
 And we behold His beauty,
 Whose blood for us was shed.”

(12) NOT A CLIMAX TO PREVIOUS SELF-DENIAL,
 BUT A CONSECRATION TO FUTURE SERVICE

A rigid fast ; an early communion ; and then a day spent for the world: nothing could be more out of keeping with the whole meaning and purpose of the sacred ordinance. Far otherwise is the spirit of our own Communion Service.

In the Epistle to the Romans we first have set before us the blessings won for us by Christ’s blood, ours through faith, and then the call: “ I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.” So it is here. The whole order of service is in keeping with the Divine

plan, and most helpful. As we see the bread broken and the wine poured out we are led to Calvary. We remember our Saviour's dying love. As we partake of the bread and wine we express our personal interest in the blessings won for us by His Cross and Passion. And with the blessings there comes the responsibility, the claim, the call : " Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God."

The drinking of the wine speaks to us of the real touch there is between the believing soul and the shed blood, the life of our blessed Lord laid down for us. When the priests of old were set apart for their sacred office and service, the sin-offering was first brought and slain and then the burnt-offering (Lev. viii. 14, 18). So at the Lord's Table we look in faith upon Christ our Sin-offering Who bore our guilt, our Burnt-offering Who offered Himself for us a Sacrifice well pleasing to God. But that was not all. The ram of consecration was next brought and slain (Lev. viii. 22). Its blood was put on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the toe of the right foot. The man to his very extremities was marked with blood. Every part of him was wholly the Lord's. Finger, toe and ear, and all between them was to be used, and used only, for God. So is the real communicant, the true believer, touched with the blood of his Lord. He is wholly His. Spirit, soul and body to its very extremities, the mark of blood is upon all.

Every fresh vision of Calvary, every fresh remembrance of the love of Him Who died for us and rose again, is a fresh reminder of what we owe to

Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. So we can never leave the Table of Our Lord without the response of loving and loyal devotion: "Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies." "Assist us that we may do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in."

"O wealth of grace, bestowed by Grace !
The debt I owe naught can replace ;
I take my all, no longer mine,
And mark it, Lord, for ever Thine."

Sacramentum was the Roman soldier's oath of obedience to his captain. This is our *Sacramentum*. It is with the vows of Our Lord upon us that we leave His Table. Soon we meet again the world we live in. But, as we do so, those vows are upon us. Constrained by His love, marked His by our place as guests at His feast, pledged by our willing sacrifice of ourselves, enabled by His indwelling Presence, the one purpose of daily life can be nothing short of this: *to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him Who died for us and rose again.*

It has been necessary, in stating the truth as taught in Holy Scripture concerning the Supper of Our Lord, to state also views, all too prevalent, which have no foundation in the Word of God. But in practice it is good again and again when we gather as invited guests around His Table and around Himself *to lay all else aside* and to fix our minds upon Him Whose living Presence is assured where two or three are gathered in His Name, and

upon His atoning death, the one only but all-sufficient hope for sinful men. It is good to enter into and hold real communion with Our Lord. It is good to behold the love that led Him to the Cross, the love that called us to Himself, the love that welcomes us to His Table here, the love that will welcome us to sit down with Him in His Kingdom above. Such times become some of the most precious hours of life. As we lay ourselves before Him, He sups with us. As He feeds our souls, we sup with Him. We are His and He is ours, in a bond that binds us to Him and Him to us, a bond that naught can break. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We close this chapter. The writer lays down his pen. The reader turns to another subject. But in doing so let each lift up his heart unto his Lord, and, beholding Him in the midst of the throne, the Lamb as it had been slain, now crowned with glory and honour, seated at the right hand of the Father, let each head be bowed in grateful remembrance, in living faith and humble petition :

“ Our Lord and Saviour, Who, to the end that we should alway remember Thy exceeding great love in dying for us and the innumerable benefits which by Thy precious blood-shedding Thou hast obtained to us, didst institute and ordain a sacred memorial of Thy cross and passion ; give us grace that, as in obedience to Thy will we partake of the bread and wine, the pledges of Thy love, so in our hearts we may believe in Thee, the one Sacrifice

for sin, once for all offered ; and that, as Thou didst give Thyself for us, so we may, in thankful remembrance of Thy love, gladly offer and present ourselves to Thee, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. . Amen."

X

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

REV. F. G. LLEWELLIN

AMONG the various changes which the English Reformation introduced there were two of the most fundamental character, involving not merely doctrinal departure of the deepest significance, but also a radical change in the Services of the Church and in the everyday life of all her truly conscientious members. The Sacrifice of the Mass with its attendant services was transformed into the more Scriptural and truly Apostolic Holy Communion Service, and at the same time the long-standing practice of Auricular Confession to the parish priest was abolished, and the idea and practice of Confession of sins directly to God was inculcated. The former of these changes is dealt with in a previous chapter, and we are here concerned with the latter, introducing the large and highly important subject of *Confession and Absolution*.

At the present time there are observed to exist within the Church of England two great bodies of opinion. The former is content to note that the Reformation abolished the established practice of Confession to the priest, substituting a more Scriptural method in its place, and as the

Reformation movement has always, up to comparatively recent times, been spoken of in terms of the greatest respect, and that by bishops and scholars of world-wide reputation, for them the question is settled—the Reformers were perfectly right in the action they took. But we are compelled to notice the existence of the other school of thought designating itself as the “Anglo-Catholic”¹ party and roundly asserting that, on the whole, the Reformation was a disaster, and that the sooner we get back to the wonderful days of the mediæval period, with its Mass and Confessional, the better.

When these two points of view are submitted to careful analysis they are found to be opposites, and not by any means complementary the one of the other, a fact which forces us back to the vital question as to what our attitude as Church people should be. And to prosecute such an inquiry it will be necessary to state the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, of which the “Anglo-Catholic” doctrine may be stated fairly to be a close, if not a slavishly literal, copy.

In the year 1551 the Council of Trent in its Fourteenth Session declared very fully on the subject of Confession and Absolution, publishing some fifteen Canons or doctrinal statements, each concluding with an anathema against those who

¹ We have throughout put the term “Anglo-Catholic” in inverted commas because from our point of view the teaching of the school so designated is not English in its outlook, nor truly Catholic in its dogmatic assertions.

rejected the Tridentine teaching. Here we find it asserted as follows :—

Canon I.—Penance is a true Sacrament.

Canon III.—The words, “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained ” (St John xx. 22-23), are to be understood of the power of forgiving and of retaining sins in the Sacrament of Penance, as the Catholic Church has always from the beginning understood them—they must not be applied to the power of preaching the Gospel.

Canon IV.—Penance has three parts—viz. Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction.

Canon VI.—The manner of Confession secretly to a priest alone, which the Church hath ever observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is not alien from the institution of Christ, nor is it a human invention.

Canon VIII.—All and such of the faithful of Christ, of either sex, are to confess to the priest once a year at least—during the season of Lent.

Canon IX.—Sacramental absolution of the priest is a judicial act and not a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven.

Canon X. quotes St Matt. xviii. 18, “ Whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven,” and declares that priests alone are the ministers of absolution, and that the words there quoted (and also in St John xx. 23, “ Whose sins ye shall forgive ”) do not apply to each and all of the faithful in Christ.

These quotations will suffice as a fair and clear

outline of the position of the Roman Church in the sixteenth century, and, of course, at the present time. Before passing to a consideration of the "Anglo-Catholic" teaching on this subject a brief reference might be made to Rome's quotations from the Douai Version of the Holy Scriptures. She attempts to find Scriptural support for her doctrine of "Penance" from such passages as Ezek. xviii. 30, St Luke xiii. 5, Acts ii. 38, etc., where the exhortation "Repent ye" (*Agere Pœnitentiam*) is translated as "Do penance," an interpretation which a more correct exegesis and a careful study of the original rule out as quite incorrect. In the same way the Greek word *μετανοία*, translated correctly in A.V. and R.V. "repentance," carries with it the idea of "changing one's mind," and that apart from any notion of Rome's doctrine of "Penance," for which there is no support in Holy Scripture. Amendment, and restoration where some wrong has been done, are, of course, entirely different conceptions from "doing penance."

The "Anglo-Catholic" position has been stated in popular form in recent years by such well-known writers as Vernon Staley, W. Knott, "H. N. T." (of Brighton), A. E. Manning-Foster, and last, and plainest of all, by that well-known enthusiast the Rev. Vernon Cecil Johnson, who prefers to be known as "Father Vernon," strange as such a title is for a Church of England clergyman. This author was chosen, as a representative writer of the "Anglo-Catholic" school, to write booklet

No. 31 of the *Congress Books*, dealing with "Confession and Absolution," and he writes in a most earnest and affectionate style, making a very powerful appeal from his own point of view. It is with sincere regret that we are compelled to add that "Father Vernon" while always *suaviter in modo* is, unfortunately, not exactly *fortiter in re*. He gives no attention to what we might call the "general teaching of the New Testament" on the subject of which he writes, and quite ignores the findings of the Lambeth Conference (December 1901), though that gathering was convoked by one of our senior bishops! But more of that hereafter: let him state his case and stand his trial. He writes thus:

"Our blessed Lord not only spoke of forgiveness; he had in himself the very power to forgive which humanity so needed. In the case of the palsied man, we see our Lord imparting to the man God's forgiveness and convincing people of it by an outward sign. 'The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way' (St Mark ii. 1-12)." Then follows a quotation from St Luke vii. 36-50, and St John xx. 23: "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you. Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye forgive they are forgiven, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." "The first thing our Lord does after his resurrection is to give the Apostles the power to forgive sins in His name. And through His Apostles he gave the power to His Church for all time; the power to administer to the souls of men that forgiveness which he won

for us upon the cross: not which the Apostles had won—they were only the instruments, the agents of which that forgiveness is to be applied to men.”

To the same effect is the teaching of all the “Anglo-Catholic” writers: some, however, are less guarded than others, as, for example, “H.N.T.” in No. 41 of *St Bartholomew’s Church Tracts*, where we read: “You would like to make your peace with God. You have heard of the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. You understand that Christ has left power to His priests to forgive sins” (p. 6). The third statement in this quotation is a clear *petitio principii*. On another point also there is a general consensus of opinion among the writers—viz. they are unanimous in regarding St John xx. 23 as the *locus classicus* in dealing with the large subject of “Confession and Absolution,” for which decision on their part we cannot be too thankful, since the point at issue can thus be made much plainer. As one of their leading preachers recently said: “If this text does not teach Priestly Absolution, that doctrine is not in the New Testament at all.” He was quite correct: the question must be fairly and courageously faced. As Evangelicals we are ready to face it. But let us again listen to “Father Vernon.” He makes the following comment on St John xx. 23. “Some people say: ‘I can see that our Lord gave power to His Apostles, but are you thereby sure that every priest ordained to-day has that power, are you sure that these words really mean the sacrament of Confession and Absolution?’

"The answer is this. The Catholic Church has all along interpreted them to mean priestly absolution, and for 1500 years there was no question about it" (italics ours).¹

Whatever this sweeping statement lacks in historical truth is clearly made up by "Father Vernon's" astounding self-confidence and prepares us for the following assertion :—

"Wherever you find the Catholic Church to-day you find the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution ; in the Eastern Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the English Catholic Church." Finally "Father Vernon" discovers that in the present Prayer Book he has authority for the "Sacrament of Confession and Absolution," and he proceeds to quote chosen sentences from (1) the Ordination Service, (2) Morning and Evening Prayer with the Absolution in the introductory portion, (3) the First Exhortation in the Holy Communion Service, and (4) the Visitation of the Sick. In this way, so we are now informed, the English Church has made provision for the "Sacrament of Confession and Absolution," and there is no more to be said. So much then for the "Anglo-Catholic" position as stated by a qualified exponent, and one who is a recognised leader of his party. If he is right, Evangelical Protestant Clergy must be perfectly wrong, for no Church is truly Catholic without the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution : but that is the question at issue. Let

¹ It is noteworthy that the Roman Church makes a similar claim in Canon VI., quoted on page 267 ; *vide* the phrase "hath ever observed."

us test the "Anglo-Catholic" assertions in order to ascertain clearly the position which a true English Prayer Book Churchman ought to hold.

A careful study of the question seems to show that there is common ground of agreement between us on the following important tenets of the faith as to—

- (a) The need of true repentance.
- (b) The need of a living faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
- (c) The need of Confession of Sins.
- (d) The need of a recognition of God as the only forgiver of His people's sins.¹

But notwithstanding such agreement there remains the vital question: "How does this forgiveness of sins become mine?" The "Anglo-Catholic" replies in language similar to that of the Roman Church, "through the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution." The Church of England, however, with truer spiritual insight and nobler grasp of the doctrine of the soul's direct access to God without human intervention, teaches: "Apply Christ's merits to thyself—have no doubts about the invitation which bids you come boldly to the Throne of Grace in every hour of need" (see Ps. xxxii. 5; Heb. iv. 14-16; 1 John i. 7-8). The question is obviously as full of profound importance as it is of real interest to the devout mind of the true Churchman. As persons desirous of

¹ This fourth point is true despite the tract-writer "H.N.T." previously quoted. If pressed for an explanation he would doubtless assert that the priest "forgives" as a chosen representative of Christ in the Church—*i.e.* in a vicarial sense.

knowing the truth in this matter, let us conduct a threefold inquiry as to—

(a) The witness of the Apostles and Biblical writers.

(b) The teaching and practice of the early Church.

(c) The Prayer Book as a Reformation document.

Assuredly from these sources we may find the guidance we need, and Evangelicals, as their forefathers have ever done, may make a bold and intrepid appeal to Scripture and History, having no fears about the strength of their position.

(a) The only book which furnishes us directly with reliable information as to the Apostles' teaching, preaching and practice is the *Bible*. This simple statement of fact needs much more emphasis than it usually receives: the Bible is our one and only authoritative guide as to the mind of Christ and His Apostles. We may learn the Apostles' views sometimes by observing what they said and did, and at other times by their studied abstention from saying and doing certain things. The habit of quoting favourite single texts, too often without the slightest reference to context, and ignoring what has been called the "general teaching," of the New Testament is proving as harmful in the present as it has ever done in the past. We turn, then, to the Bible and note the witness of St John's Gospel which provides the much debated text from chapter xx. Here is the chief corner-stone of the Confessional edifice. It is advantageous to compare the passage

(verses 21-23) with the equally striking portion in the First Epistle of St John, chapter i., verses 8-10, remembering, as Bishop Lightfoot remarks, that the Epistle is "an appendix to the Fourth Gospel," and it is agreed with almost perfect unanimity to have come from the pen of the same writer. Place the two passages side by side and ask yourself whether St John believed, taught or practised the ideas so assiduously set forth by the Roman or "Anglo-Catholics" as an absolute necessity in the true Christian's life.

As to St Peter: he might well be regarded as an authority, for he is named in connection with the keys (St Matt. xvi. 17-20 and xviii. 15-19), and the *promises* here made are said to have become *possessions* in St John xx. 23. Twice do we read in the New Testament of St Peter using his "keys" or "remitting sins," if these things can be done by a faithful, loving proclamation of the Gospel—as is most certainly suggested in the important parallel passage in St Luke xxiv. 33, 46-48. In Acts ii. 15-41 the Apostle preaches the Gospel to Jews on the Day of Pentecost, and in the tenth chapter we read of his evangelistic labours in the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius, the Holy Spirit honouring the Gospel message to the conversion of souls on both these conspicuous occasions.

As to St Paul and his teaching: what, for example, are the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians but a glorious declaration of Jesus Christ as a necessity in the life of the sinful, and the one forgiver of our sins? But observe 2 Cor. ii. 14-16,

where the Apostle declares the preaching of the Gospel to be "the savour of life" to him who shall accept Jesus as Lord, and "the savour of death" to him who shall reject the Gospel.

Reference might also be made to the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapters iv. 14-16 and x. 19-23, which passages contain a most thrilling appeal, a most loving invitation, and a plain teaching as to the soul's direct access to God without any human intervention, in the matter of our forgiveness and reception by God.

Now what conclusion do we reach as we study these passages (not a few isolated texts apart from their contexts), all of which deal directly with the subject of Forgiveness? All these writers emphasise the absolute and imperative need of confession of sins to God, of heartfelt repentance, and of a living faith in all who would come to God by Jesus Christ and accept salvation as a free gift of God's wondrous grace. The doctrine of direct access to the throne of grace in and through our Lord Jesus Christ is a main plank in New Testament teaching, and the greatest glory of the Reformation was the reinstatement of this truth which had been concealed and overloaded with error and superstition. But in all our study of the New Testament we miss something and somebody: the former is the Confessional Box, and the latter is the Father Confessor. Nor may we explain this phenomenon as a slip on the part of the inspired writers. Refer again to 1 John, i. ; 1 Peter ii. ; Heb. iv. 14-16 ; Rom. iii. 23 to vi. 23. Here were the very places for a reference

to the clergy (or the Apostles) as the duly appointed officers for the forgiveness of sins.

An omission to supply proper directions at points such as these, where the precise question now before us was also before the Apostolic writers, would invalidate the claim of each and all of them to be "competent witnesses." This would indeed be the story of the battle of Hastings without William the Conqueror, or the storming of the Heights of Quebec without a reference to the heroic General Wolfe! Christianity, let us be assured of it, had to provide better witnesses than such forgetful ones as these ere it won its way in this stubborn world. Neither in the Acts of the Apostles nor in any of the Epistles do we read of the Apostles pronouncing any priestly absolution, and yet if such were God's plan in the matter of forgiveness can anyone imagine Saints Peter, John, or Paul purposely omitting such a plain duty or failing to exercise such divinely provided powers? The mere suggestion is preposterous!

In the "Acts" we observe that, by preaching, the Apostles offered remission of sins; and in declaring that there is no pardon, save in the Name of Christ, they "retained sins" (compare ii. 38 and iv. 12). In this, and no other recorded way, did the Apostles discharge their great commission.

It is remarkable also that in concluding the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which contains so many reproofs, the Apostle says: "Examine your own selves: prove your own selves" (chapter xiii. 5). How strange to omit all reference to the Confessional here if such a system had been part

of the settled order! There is only one explanation—viz. that such a practice was completely unknown in the infant Church.

Thus the Apostles afford no support for the extreme claims of the priestly party. Our Lord gave His Apostles and Disciples certain instructions and powers, and we see how they obeyed His commands by proclaiming with loving faithfulness the Gospel which alone can save the soul of sinful man.

(b) We now turn to early Church history to inquire as to the practice of the Church in its earliest generations; the claim of the various "Catholic" writers being that their teaching on Confession and Absolution is that of the undivided Church since Apostolic times. Can they make a better display here than when appealing to the Scriptures where their case is observed to be hopelessly weak? We think not.

At the Fulham Conference on 1st January 1902 the Rev. Dr Henry Gee, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, and now Dean of Gloucester, put forward the following considered statement, which was not seriously challenged by any of the fourteen scholars associated with him in the inquiry:—"On this question (*i.e.* Confession and Absolution), the mediæval period is absolutely different from the primitive one. The Sacrament of Penance is the result of a long evolution. Do we appreciate as fully as we ought the importance of the argument from silence in the second century?

"If ever there was a case where you would expect some reference to Confession and Absolution, it

would be in the Epistle of Clement, but there is not a word of it. Or, again, think of St Ignatius writing to St Polycarp; if the practice had existed he would surely have directed the attention of the Church to it. So also of St Polycarp's direction to the Philippian presbyters. Irenæus, in the fifth book of his work against heresies, has a long section on remission of sins (v. 17, 1, 2) but no word about Absolution or Confession; the whole approach to God is clear and immediate.

"There is thus *a complete silence* on that which afterwards became prominent; but a new era begins with the Alexandrian school. There you get the idea of ghostly counsel symbolised by Clement's *παιδαγωγός*; it is suggested that we need someone to help and guide us. Or think of his story of St John and the young robber, pointing to the wisdom of men finding a friend who will be a guide and a help to them; but we find nothing of technical confession and absolution.

"Origen (*d.* 254) often brings forward the idea of spiritual advice. With the Alexandrian school we get the stepping-stone to the later schisms and all they brought about. These schisms had the most enormous influence in developing the whole idea. You get, first of all, the new influence of the penitential system. In Gregory Thaumaturgus we see how carefully this discipline was being framed. While this was going on, the old idea of ghostly counsel existed side by side with it. Then the two are found fusing and Jerome protests, as do Augustine and Chrysostom.

"*Leo the Great, in his letter to the Campanian*

Bishops (A.D. 440-461) indicates the transition to secret confession.

“Looking hastily over the centuries that followed, we notice in later days two influences. In the first place, the barbarian invasions are the key to the whole of mediæval Church history. They let down the standard of life and practice. Then after the invasion we find those horrible penitentials making their way, as in Ireland and England, and they had an immense influence on Western Europe. Presbyters became more and more the keepers of men’s consciences. Still we find ambiguities of practice. Dr Lea has shown how in the ninth century the Council of Pavia allowed presbyters to have the power of reconciliation. Dr Lea says the whole formation of the doctrine of penance is due to the University of Paris. Gratian represents it as still inchoate in the twelfth century, and then Peter Lombard brings the whole system into a method. In this way, and along these lines, the whole doctrine and practices was formed. It was the result of an elaborate evolution and development.”

We have given this quotation without abbreviation because of its value as an accurate sketch of the rise of the Roman doctrine of Confession and Absolution, and because of Dean Gee’s authority as one of the best of our Church’s historians. The only note that might be added is that the culminating point in the process was, of course, the action of the fourth Lateran Council, which, in the year 1215, made Auricular Confession no longer

voluntary, but compulsory, for either sex, once a year at least.

In view of "Father Vernon's" strong statement about the unbroken practice of the Church some readers may desire to know the opinions of two other great historians and scholars of our Church.

Archdeacon Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* contains an illuminating article under the title of "Exomolegesis" in which he points out that "the early Fathers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, hardly allude to private confession at all, and among the writers generally of the first five hundred years those who mention it do so with some reference more or less direct to public discipline." After a description of the Roman Absolution of later times and a comparison with the practice of the Eastern Church, the writer proceeds: "To resort to a spiritual guide for comfort and counsel was one thing; to obtain through his ministry by confession, penance, and absolution, reconciliation with God, and communion with the faithful, was another, and there is *no proof* that the two were combined and that private sacramental confession had any existence in the first five hundred years of the Christian Church."

The Greek Penitentials at the end of the sixth century, and the Latin ones of a century later, give no hint of habitual confession of common infirmities, or of private confession being a matter of indispensable obligation.

Referring to the letter of Leo the Great (A.D. 440-461) to the Bishops of Campania, the article continues thus: "In the early ages public con-

fession was only remitted in case of danger to the individual or scandal to the Church. By this constitution of Leo, secret confession to the priest was to take the place of open confession, and the priest's intercession of the intercession of the Church. The door thus opened for the escaping from the shame of public confession was never afterwards closed, and secret confession gradually became the rule of the Church."

Very similar to the above is the strong testimony of the learned Dean Hook in his *Church Dictionary* in the article "Confession," pp. 223-226. He concludes his erudite historical review thus: "By the Lateran Council, A.D. 1215, every person, of each sex, was obliged once in a year to confess to the minister of his parish the sins which he had been guilty of." Auricular Confession to the priest being thus established, some of the school divines of the Roman Church carried it to further lengths, making it an article of faith; to be received by the priest, not ministerially, but judicially and authoritatively; that every single sin must be discovered to them with all its aggravating circumstances, etc. All which tyranny over men's consciences and diving into the secrets of families and governments, were confirmed by the Council of Trent (1551).

It appears then certain that before the time when Innocent III. in 1215 promulgated the celebrated 21st Canon, "*Omnis utriusque sexus*," above referred to, private confession was not deemed a necessity, but that afterwards it was. Local Synods, as, for instance, that of Lambeth,

A.D. 1378, reimposed the Canon in a still stricter form, and it became generally taught that Confession was part of a Sacrament which is generally necessary to salvation.

“ This,” says Jeremy Taylor, “ the Church of Rome now affirms and the Church of England denies ”; and Hooker sums up : “ We find the use of Confession, especially public, allowed of by the Fathers, but that extreme and rigorous necessity of auricular and private confession which is at this day so mightily upheld by the Church of Rome we find not ” (*Ecc. Pol.*, Bk. VI. iv. 13).

We have thus been able to take an historical review of the practice of the visible Church up to the Reformation period, and, if history counts for anything, the “ Anglo-Catholics ” may be well pleased not to rely on it for support for their demand for Auricular Confession and Absolution. It is easy enough to see how a helpful practice in process of time became positively harmful, and the drift from public confession of heinous sins to private confession of all sins is plainly traceable in the faithful pages of ecclesiastical history.

In concluding this section of our subject we could hardly do better than remind the reader of the conclusions reached at the Fulham Conference on “ Confession and Absolution.” For three days from 30th December 1901 some fifteen leading Churchmen conferred on the meaning of Our Lord’s words in St John xx. 22-23 and their use in the Ordinal, also *re* the practice of the Church in primitive times and the Middle Ages, etc.

Their findings were as follows :—

(1) The members were agreed that Our Lord's words in St John's Gospel, " Whose soever sins ye remit," etc., are not to be regarded as addressed only to the Apostles or the clergy, but as a commission to the whole Church, and as conveying a summary of the message with which it is charged.

(2) It was agreed that our other formularies permitted such Confession and Absolution in certain circumstances.

(3) The discipline of private Confession and Absolution cannot be shown to have existed for some centuries after the foundation of the Church (pp. vii-viii, Introduction to the *Fulham Conference Report*).

The importance of such " findings " is very considerable. " Father Vernon " could scarcely have studied the *Report* or he would not have committed himself to the statement concerning 1500 years' continuous priestly interpretation of St John xx. 23.

(c) The precarious nature of the evidence on behalf of Auricular Confession and Priestly Absolution in the New Testament and in early Church history having been observed, we are now in a position to consider the teaching of the *Book of Common Prayer*. That it is a Reformation document everybody knows. May it be possible that, having failed to establish their claims in the above two departments, they may be successful in this remaining one ? We think not. Let us, as before, review the leading facts, and endeavour to know

the mind of our martyred forefathers who bequeathed the Prayer Book to us.

There are two points which need to be grasped if we would know the truth in this matter; otherwise it is quite easy to get into a mental fog, which is never a comfortable state. The first point relates to a well-known *fact*, and the second to an undeniable Reformation *teaching*.

Before the Reformation, from 1215 to the death of Henry VIII. in 1547, the Confessional was part of Church order and was compulsory for all and sundry persons, but by the time the Reformation was consolidated the Confessional had ceased to exist in our Church. The fact, we repeat, should be carefully noted.

If questioned as to the origin of this great change, the answer is very simple—viz. the Reformation doctrine of Direct Access of the individual soul to the Throne of Grace made the Confessional Box unnecessary, and turned the heart of the penitent directly to God and not to man.

The historical fact and the Church teaching here mentioned will help us to measure the value of "Anglo-Catholic" claims, to which, once again, we now turn. Let us take the four points already mentioned :

(1) *The Ordination Service*.—This was published as a newly reformed Ordinal, in the year 1550, and it is in the most striking contrast to the previous Romish Ordinal.

Let us peruse the bishop's address to the men

about to be ordained presbyters. He reminds them that they are to be "Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards of the Lord," and, further, "this weighty work pertaining to the salvation of man cannot be performed but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of Holy Scripture, and with a life agreeable to the same."

Later on in the Service comes the act of Ordination, and it is well worthy of careful note, especially the copula "And" in the phrase, "And be thou," etc. It reads as follows:—

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. *And* be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

To the newly ordained presbyter, still kneeling, the bishop delivers a Bible, saying:

"Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto."

In the year 1540 the penalty for denying the need of Auricular Confession was *death*; here in 1550 was *a reformed Ordination Service without the slightest reference to its necessity*! What action could be more significant?

In a word, the reformers had, after the most diligent study of the New Testament and early

Church history, abolished the Mass priest and Father Confessor, and reintroduced the Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Their next step was the revision of the Prayer Book, and though there was no undue emphasis on Auricular Confession in the 1549 Prayer Book, there was also no provision for the General Confession accompanied by a Public Absolution.

In 1552, however, the latter was introduced and the Confessional Box passed away, to the moral and spiritual uplifting of the people.

(2) We may now turn to "Father Vernon's" second support from the Prayer Book—viz. *Morning and Evening Prayer*, with the opening portion of which we are all so familiar. After "Dearly beloved brethren" comes the General Confession, and then follows the reading of the Absolution. Here, quite clearly, simply and most faithfully is declared the *usual course* to be adopted by those who desire God's forgiveness, and in reply to any suggestion that "it is God who forgives but the priest who absolves" this public, declaratory and precatory form of Absolution teaches that "God Himself both pardons and absolves all who truly repent and believe the Gospel." Note also the rubric: "The people shall answer here, and *at the end of all other prayers*, 'Amen.'" No honest person with even the slightest pretensions to the minimum of grammatical knowledge can fail to grasp with facility the teaching of our Church in the Absolution. To quote it as a pretext for Auricular Confession is really indefensible.

As the learned Dean Wace puts it: "The duty

of the minister is so to preach the promises of God made in the Gospel that the penitent may feel assured of God's forgiveness and may thus not feel the need of any special and personal absolution."

The *normal instrument* for obtaining peace is the General Absolution, recalled to the mind of all true penitents in the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer: "Almighty God hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel."

The Dean proceeds: "Our people need to be taught to rest on the gracious assurance of the Saviour, without seeking or requiring any special assurance from individual ministers."

(3) The next quotation is from the conclusion of First Exhortation in the middle of the Communion Service, which, though rarely used to-day, furnishes an apparent foothold for the Father Confessor: "If there be any of you who *by this means* cannot quiet his own conscience, let him come to me or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word and open his grief: that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution together with ghostly counsel and advice to the quieting of his conscience and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

Well, and what have we here? The position is perfectly plain if we grant to this excellent Exhortation precisely that fair treatment with which we desire our own statements to be received. Let

the whole of the Exhortation be read rather than the last ten lines of it, and it will be quite clear that we are furnished with a rule for general guidance. "First [note the word, *not* last] examine yourself as in the sight of God and by the 'rule of God's commandments'—do not come to the Holy Communion with other than a cleansed heart."

Finally, if there be any of you who, by this means, cannot quiet his own conscience (a word obviously to the over-scrupulous Communicant; for while some are too bold, others, at times, are too fearful and lacking in assurance), words of strong comfort and assurance, based on Holy Scripture, may be offered by the discreet and learned minister of God's Word. But supposing no such conditions are present, nothing of that kind happens.

The final portion of the Exhortation is governed by an "if"—it is clearly hypothetical, as may be seen by a fair and honest reading of the whole.

(4) The Visitation of the Sick.

Little need be said on this point, for the principle is the same as the previous case, *mutatis mutandis*. The case is hypothetical: "If the sick man feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter." As a matter of fact most of us clergy do not use this "office" at all, and Canon 67 declares that *no man who is a preacher need use this Service*, but shall instruct and comfort the sick as he shall think most needful and convenient.

We all find the Scriptures, Collects and an extemporary prayer far preferable, but if anyone wishes to press the point we answer, as in section

(3), the case is hypothetical—it is governed by an “if.” It is exceptional and not normal.

“Father Vernon” after quoting these four cases proceeds: “This then is our authority for the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution. The Church has administered this gift through the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution, and the English Church has made provision for it in the Prayer Book.”

Could any reasoning be more unfair? What further proof need we that the “Anglo-Catholic” position cannot bear investigation? But before leaving this part of our subject a short note on the word “Sacrament” seems to be necessary. The clergy of the Church of England all assent, at their ordination or preferment, to the Thirty-nine Articles. Article XXV. declares that there are, and can be, only two *Sacraments*—viz. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—and that this other “Sacrament” (*i.e.* of Penance) is not a Sacrament at all. The point needs to be noted with care.

And so we have seen that the Church of England, at the time of the blessed Reformation, went back to the teaching of Holy Writ and the best practices of the primitive Church. As to the oft-quoted St John xx. 23, a moment’s comparison with the obviously parallel passage in St Luke xxiv. 33, 45-48, proves that Disciples as well as Apostles were present, and *all* were thus commissioned to proclaim publicly and with authority the conditions of Divine Forgiveness. The Fulham

Conference wisely and honestly declared this to be the fair and true interpretation of the passage.

Dean Hook's great *Sermon on Auricular Confession* may well provide us with a summing up to which all reasonable Churchmen will assent. The Dean declared as follows :—

“ The difference between the teaching of the Church of Rome and the Church of England in respect to Auricular Confession may be summed up thus :

“ The Church of Rome regards Confession to man as a means of grace. This we deny. At the same time we regard it as a means of comfort to weak minds and scrupulous consciences, and to persons in difficulties or in doubt. The Church of Rome makes it the rule, we the exception. The Church of Rome commands it ; the Church of England permits it. The Church of England in accordance with the Scripture and the primitive Church and the Greek Church, asserts that Confession to God alone is sufficient—*is the rule*—is the course which ought to be pursued in all but exceptional cases : and in this respect to the Church of England, to the primitive Church, and to the written and infallible Word of the living God, the Church of Rome stands opposed.”

The only comment that need be made is that what is said here of the Church of Rome's error may also be said with truth of the present-day “ Anglo-Catholic ” teaching. It is contrary to God's Word written, contrary to the practice of the primitive Church, and contrary to the mind and

spirit of the Reformation and our incomparable Prayer Book.

For further study of "Confession and Absolution," including some points which lack of space would not permit us to discuss here, the following are strongly recommended:—

Confession and Absolution (especially chapter iv., on "Church Formularies"), by Bishop T. W. Drury.

Roman Catholicism (chapter v.), by Rev. Chas. H. H. Wright, D.D., Ph.D.

The Confessional in the Church of England, by Archdeacon Buckland, M.A.

The Catholic Faith, by the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.

NOTE

(a) ST MATTHEW XVI. 19.—"‘Binding and loosing.’ These terms refer simply to things or acts, prohibiting or else permitting them, declaring them lawful or unlawful. This was one of the powers claimed by the Rabbis. . . . If this then represented the LEGISLATIVE, another pretension of the Rabbis that of declaring ‘free’ or else ‘liable’ (*i.e.* guilty), expressed their claim to the JUDICIAL power. By the first of these they ‘bound’ or ‘loosed’ acts or things: by the second they ‘remitted’ or ‘retained’—*i.e.* declared a person free from or liable to punishment, to compensation or to sacrifice."—Dr EDERSHEIM, the Christian-Jewish scholar, in *Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii., p. 85.

“ To bind and to loose is a well-known Rabbinical formula, meaning to prohibit or permit.”—Dr H. B. SWETE, Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

The names of many leading scholars might be mentioned in support of the above quotations ; such, for example, as Deans Farrar and Plumptre ; Bishops Lightfoot, Drury and Wordsworth ; Drs C. H. H. Wright and W. H. G. Thomas ; also the Rev. A. Carr in the *Cambridge Greek Testament*.

(b) ST JOHN XX. 23.—“ As the promise (in St Matt. xvi.) gave the power of laying down the terms of fellowship, so this gives a living and abiding power to declare the fact and the conditions of forgiveness. . . . The commission must be regarded properly as the commission of the Christian Society, and not as that of the Christian ministry.”—Bishop WESTCOTT, *Commentary on St John*, p. 295.

“ While the Christian Church lasts it has the power of remitting and retaining, along with the power of spiritual discernment which is part of the gift of the Spirit. That is, it has the power to declare the conditions on which forgiveness is granted and the fact that it has or has not been granted.”—Professor A. PLUMMER, *Cambridge Greek Testament*, “ St John,” p. 344.

These quotations, from some of our Church’s greatest scholars, agreeing as they do with the “ Findings ” of the Fulham Conference, may assist readers to see that the more recent “ Anglo-Catholic ” interpretations of these two texts are open to the gravest objections when tested by the best scholarship and the soundest learning.

XI

THE PRAYER BOOK

By ALBERT MITCHELL

Member of the Church Assembly

EVANGELICAL Churchmen are loyal Churchmen. They have always been noted for their adherence to Church principles and practice. If we go back to the days of the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century we find that so soon as the distinction appeared between those who worked within the Church of their baptism (amongst whom the revival had its beginning) and those who gravitated more to the Nonconformists who began to respond to the new impulse of life, the name by which the leaders of the revival within the Church were known was that of "the serious clergy." The term "Evangelical" was thrown at them (even as the early disciples were first called Christians at Antioch) and cheerfully accepted as a truthful and convenient label.¹ They were essentially Churchmen, and from those days of revival Evangelical Churchmen have sat close to the Prayer Book in teaching and in practice. There are no other members of the English Church who can fairly claim to be more definite Churchmen than the strict Evangelicals.

¹ The Wesleys were not the founders of modern Evangelicalism. Whitfield, although ten years younger, was preaching the Gospel with freedom for a year before John Wesley found its liberty. The Breath of God was independent of any one man.

For Evangelical principles were not new in the English Church in the eighteenth century. Those who maintained them were in a worthy succession. A study of Church history shows that God never left Himself without living Witness *within* the Church to the vital faith of the Gospel, however sadly the official Church compromised itself with the world. There was always a Holy Seed *within* the Church which by the living Breath of God was made instrumental from time to time, in various ways, in revival of Church life. Throughout mediæval Christendom its witness lived ; it quietly prepared the way for the Reformation, and in due time animated that wonderful movement ; and it again came to its own in the Evangelical Revival. It can always be identified by its theme: "The word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation." The function of the Holy Seed is that of witness, not of conquest ; of influence, not of dominance. It best discharges its function when it is definite and uncompromising. It fails when it mediatises. But always its influence is far beyond any limits that are consciously recognisable. Many become "Evangelical" in feeling who would never subscribe to Evangelical principles, but they do not thereby share in the Evangelical witness.

The Reformation of religion in the sixteenth century was a liberating and positive and constructive movement. To that the name "Protestant" testifies ; for a Protestant is a Witness for the Truth. It aimed at the liberation and reconstruction on a positive basis of personal religion—of the personal responsibility and personal relation-

ship of the individual Christian to and with the Sovereign Lord of men's souls. It substituted the principle of justification by faith for the principle of justification through the Church. The peculiar history of the English Church, in its insular preservation from some of the worst features of Continental religion, may have played its part in focusing the attention of the English reformers upon questions of liturgy and worship: but the principle at work is clear. Hence the substitution by our reformers of the practice of "Common Prayer" for the idea of "corporate worship." (*Cf.* the definition of the Church in the Second Eucharistic Thanksgiving: "The blessed company of all faithful people.") The "Church" is composed of redeemed and justified individuals: individuals are not redeemed or justified by membership of the Church. Here is the Evangelical position in a nutshell; and it is the position of the Prayer Book. (*Cf.* Heb. xii. 23.)

The Book of Common Prayer was the product of English life, English learning, and English tradition. No competent student now repeats the reproach that the English liturgy was directly influenced by the handful of Continental reformers who found a refuge in England for a few years, but never mastered the English tongue, and were dependent upon interpreters or Latin translations for such knowledge as they had of the new English service-books. The doctrinal position of 1552 was asserted by Cranmer in 1548 before Bucer and his associates landed in England. That Cranmer utilised Bucer's work in the Rhineland we know:

but only as he used Quignon's work in Spain, and the Greek MSS. by which Italian libraries were enriched after the fall of Constantinople: adapting it all with the help of the vast stores of learning that he, and other of the reformers, possessed: and weaving it all in with the old English religious ideas as they had persisted since the days before Lanfranc had falsified Church records (Dimock, *Eucharistic Worship*, 124 *et seq.*; Foxe, v. 270) through the mysticism and Lollardy of the intervening centuries. The English Prayer Book was no compromise between mediæval conservatism and Continental innovation, but a big step forward in native English life. In the providence of God the English people had been prepared for the English Prayer Book. The new was deliberately new, but inspired with the truer conservatism that looked back to purer ideals and purer worship antecedent to mediævalism. (*Cf.* Article XXIX., which definitely excluded Lutheranism.) References to "foreign influence" on the 1552 book are to-day a mark of discredited and out-of-date "scholarship"!

For the Book of Common Prayer was above all, and before all, based on the most primitive authority — those Holy Scriptures recovered for the common people in their vulgar tongue. The book of 1549 was claimed to be compiled "having as well eye and respect to the most sincere and pure Christian religion taught by Scripture as to the usages in the primitive Church" (Act of 1549), and the book of 1552 was defined as the same book "faithfully and godly perused, explained, and

made fully perfect." The principle shortly afterwards laid down in Article VI. was already at work in 1548-1552. The Prayer Book is based upon Holy Scripture, impregnated with its atmosphere, and largely phrased in direct or oblique quotation from the Scriptures. It is Protestant (Witness for the Truth) in essence, although that term is never used. It would have been impossible but for the previous translation of the Bible into the mother tongue. Conformity to Holy Scripture was dearer to the compilers of the Prayer Book than continuity with the Church of the past. They lovingly preserved the old where it was Scriptural, but they inexorably cut it away where it did not "sound according to the Scripture" (Latimer).¹ The 1549 book was hurriedly drafted, enacted with difficulty, and it never became popular. The 1552 book was leisurely revised, enacted with ready

¹ It is sometimes asserted that the 1552 Act declared that all that was in the 1549 book was agreeable to the Word of God. This is not so; the words of the 1552 Act are:

"Where there has been a very godly order set forth by the authority of Parliament, for common prayer and administration of the sacraments to be used in the mother tongue within the Church of England, agreeable to the Word of God and the primitive Church, very comfortable to all good people desiring to live in Christian conversation, and most profitable to the estate of this realm, upon the which the mercy, favour, and blessing of Almighty God is nowise so readily and plenteously poured as by common prayers, due using of the sacraments, and often preaching of Gospel, with the devotion of the hearers."

The words "agreeable, etc.," appear to refer to the use of the mother tongue, but the reader can form his own conclusion. Cf. the proposition debated in Westminster Abbey in 1559: "It is against the Word of God and the custom of the primitive Church to use a tongue unknown to the people in Common Prayers and administration of the sacraments." See also Article XXIV.

goodwill, and at once taken to the heart of the people. It ran into eight editions.

The Book of Common Prayer is compiled from a lay standpoint. The first great change was in the language used. The homely mother tongue replaced the tongue of the learned and the priest; the laity were encouraged to use their voices in public worship. In the rubric to the first English Litany in 1547, Cranmer wrote: "And such among the people as have books and can read, may read them quietly and softly to themself; and such as cannot read, let them quietly and attentively give audience in time of the said prayers, having their minds erect to Almighty God, and devoutly praying in their hearts the same petitions, which do enter in at their ears; so that with one sound of the heart and one accord God may be glorified in his Church." In the 1549 book the rubrics show that "the Clerks" (*i.e.* the Quire) are still largely in evidence, although the phrase "Clerks and people" appears. And it is necessary to provide "Where there are no Clerks, there the Priest shall say all things appointed here for them to sing." But by 1552 Cranmer's wise tutoring, by urging such as can read to accustom themselves to the sound of their own voices in the service (albeit "quietly and softly to themself"), has borne fruit, and responses are assigned to "the people," who are directed to join audibly in the Lord's Prayer, Confessions, etc.

How significant it is that while in the mediæval unreformed service there is precise direction how the priest is to communicate in the sacrament,

and no provision at all for the communion of the people, in the Book of Common Prayer the directions for the communicating of the people are precise and full, but nothing is said as to how the priest is to communicate himself. The old theory of the corporate worship of the Church performed by the priest, the people merely "assisting," has passed. Now we have the "common prayer" of a company of faithful people, whose devotions are led by a minister of the Word and Sacraments. Even the Absolution is, in public worship, precatory, and the people say "Amen," which is an assent, not a response.

Then in the Prayer Book there is a new emphasis on both doctrine and devotion. The subjective side of religion is added to the objective. The old Creeds, with their priceless witness to the objective facts of our faith, are retained, in the old Western singular number. But especially in the ministration of the sacraments there is brought in the explicit statement of the method of our salvation, most particularly in the *anamnesis* which in 1549 was substituted for *the oblation*.¹

¹ "O God heavenly Father [1552, Almighty God our heavenly Father] which [1662, who] of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption, who made there (by His one oblation [1552, of Himself] once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and did institute and in His Holy Gospel command us to continue a perpetual memory of that His precious death until His coming again," in place of "This oblation therefore of our service, as also of Thy whole family, we beseech Thee, O Lord, favourably to accept. . . . (Rubric: Here let him look at the Host.) Which oblation do Thou Almighty God we beseech Thee, in all things vouchsafe to make blessed, admitted, ratified, reasonable, and

The devotional tone of the Prayer Book is neither corporate nor individualistic, but it makes strong and fervent appeal to the individual heart and soul in a spirit of fellowship and communion. The prayers are neither private individual prayers said in public, nor the corporate expression of an official community, but they are truly "common prayer." At no point does selfish isolation intrude, but at no point is the personal element lacking. The "faithful"—*i.e.* those individuals who are justified by their personal faith in a living Saviour—are a consciously blessed company of faithful people.

And the glory of the Prayer Book is the positive and constructive character of its teaching. There are few negatives; it prohibits mainly by omitting. The great quantities of Holy Scripture appointed to be read or sung; the incorporation of Bible phrases into prayer and response; the simple, straightforward exhortations and expositions; the homely, unaffected language of confession of sin, petition, and thanksgiving; all tend to lead the heart Godward rather than to direct the mind manward. Therefore it is that it is so easy to lose the consciousness of self in the common worship of the congregation. Herein is the marvellous expression of devotional feeling combined with education and edification. The compilers of the

acceptable." The atmosphere is changed; the manward or subjective remembrance ousts the Godward oblation. This again is the Evangelical position very clearly put. But it was not till 1552 that all trace of the "old leaven" was removed. It may be noted that Mr W. C. Bishop claimed "*Quam oblationem*" as the Roman Epiclesis.

Book of Common Prayer had never heard of the modern theory of "the expulsive power of a new affection" to heal disease of mind, but they knew the truth that that theory is based on and they acted upon the principle that underlies it.

This principle was carried out in rubric and ritual. The fantastic theory put forward in recent years to bolster up a particular interpretation of the miscalled Ornaments Rubric—namely, that the Prayer Book was intended to be supplemented and expounded by the unreformed rubrics and *cautelæ* and the traditional method of performing Divine service—is disposed of by the words of the Preface to the 1549 book: "Furthermore, by this order, the curates shall need none other books for their public service, but this book and the Bible: by the means whereof, the people shall not be at so great charge for books, as in time past they have been." The Prayer Book was a self-contained and self-sufficient Directory of Public Worship and Manual of Devotion. Some of the old clergy did "mystake" the book, but they were admonished by the Council that the service must be done "as it is appointed in the book of common service without *cautele* or digression from the common order"; and a little later orders were issued to destroy "all other bokes of service, the keeping whereof shold be a let to the usage of the said boke of commene prayers" so "that they never after may serve either to any such use as they were provided for, or be at any time a let to that godly and uniforme Order." As the Prayer Book superseded all the old books, so the simple

intelligible rubrics of the new book quietly displaced all the old "curiosity" (*i.e.* crotchetyness) of ritual. This was, from the first, the intention.

It is sometimes asserted that Morning and Evening Prayer are in origin purely clerical or monastic offices. This is not so. Morning Prayer is largely based on the leading elements of the old Nocturns, Matins, Lauds and Prime; and these services (in the later Middle Ages run all together, and sometimes even said the night before) were founded on the Vigil Service of the early Church, a lay office, based in its turn on the lay Synagogue Service, taken over and adapted by the Christian Church. With the rise of monasticism and formation of clerical communities these lay services were first copied, and then absorbed, by the services of the conventual and collegiate communities; but in lineage Morning Prayer remains the most ancient of all Christian services, as it can be traced back to the synagogues of Judea and Galilee.¹ (See Batiffol, *Hist. of Roman Brev.*, cap. 1.) Evening Prayer is perhaps of less certain origin, but the evening prayers appear very early.

The teaching of the Prayer Book on sin, repentance, forgiveness and holiness is fully evangelical. Sin is the result of our own evil nature, "the devices and desires of our own hearts," but it is

¹ Morning Prayer was originally at six in summer and seven in winter, the Eucharist being later at nine; but Archbishop Grindal threw the two services together in 1571 (Hole's *Manual*, 245). About the time of the Evangelical Revival Holy Communion began to be ministered in connection with the (very) early Sunday morning lectureships. Dated plate of such lectureships remains to-day.

also an objective evil from which we pray to be delivered. Repentance and forgiveness alike come to us of God's free mercy, by his Holy Gospel, in Christ Jesus our Lord and for His sake. Note well that in the daily absolution repentance is expressly stated to be God's gift (Acts v. 31), in contradistinction from the mediæval form of public "absolution" which pitifully besought "time for true repentance" (a piece of bondage that was sought in the Reply to the Royal Letters of Business to be refastened on the Church).¹ And always the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasised.

Very little alteration was made under Elizabeth. There was no Elizabethan revision, but only a reprint of the 1552 book with three statutory alterations. The non-statutory alterations of 1604 were regularised in 1661-1662, and included the addition to the Catechism on the Sacraments, which is most explicitly Evangelical. Note that the Catechism expressly declares reception to be necessary in the Lord's Supper, and so implicitly condemns non-communicating attendance. (The outward and visible sign is "given unto us," according to Christ's ordainment²; and it is

¹ See *Convoc. Cant.*, 533. In the Church Assembly's Committee this was struck out at the instance of Evangelical members. Cf. N. A. 84.

² The Latin may be here given, from the book of 1670: "Externum et visibile signum intelligo, internæ ac spiritualis gratiæ, quod nobis datur, ab ipso Christo institutum, tanquam medium quo eam recipimus, et arrabonem ad nos de ea certos faciendos." In Bright and Medd's *Latin Prayer Book*, a purely modern and private production, although much used, "quod nobis datur" is substituted by "collatæ nobis," which flatly contradicts the punctuation of the Annexed Book.

"Bread and Wine," which the Lord hath commanded to be *received*—words which also exclude any idea of change in the elements, the "Body and Blood" being expressly stated to be "the inward part or thing signified," and received only by "the faithful." Cf. Article XXIX.)

The alterations in 1661-1662 do not in any way lessen the Evangelical character of the Prayer Book, so long as the punctuation of the Annexed Book of the rubric before the Consecration Prayer is remembered.¹ The proposed revision of 1689 (happily) fell through.

Throughout the Prayer Book the Gospel is explicitly stated. The collocation of prayer and praise and reading of Holy Scripture is perfect. How much the Church folk of this favoured land owe to this fact, which has resulted in the dissemination of Gospel truth in the rural parts even when the living witnesses have inadequately discharged their responsibilities! May God in His goodness and mercy grant that nothing may hinder the continuance of this blessing to our land and people.

It is almost a commonplace that the English Prayer Book stands next to the English Bible as a literary classic, and its language has helped to ennoble our literature and that of daughter races. What is of even greater importance is that it has been during the greatest period of our country's history a worthy handmaid in teaching, in devotion,

¹ *I.e.* the semicolon after "hands." Cf. Bishop Wren's proposal, Jacobson's *Fragmentary Illustrations*, p. 81—a very valuable little book, only to be had second-hand.

in consolation, and in edification, to the great Book of God's wonderful revelation of Himself and His will and purpose to man, in the spirit of which it was conceived, and in the very words of which it is so largely framed, and to which it steadily bears witness and loyally conforms ; even as it bears clear witness to the person and atoning and redeeming work of Him Who is over all, God blessed for evermore, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

XII

THE SECOND ADVENT

REV. C. H. TITTERTON

THIS most important subject is intimately connected with prophecy, and a knowledge of prophecy is therefore essential if it is to be rightly understood.

Prophecy is very different from history, for it is not intended to give us a knowledge of the future analogous to that which history gives us in the past. In prophecy the occurrence of important events is so predicted as to produce in the minds of the people of God faith that they will certainly come to pass. This is its Divine intention.

Prophecy makes a general impression with regard to future events, which is reliable and salutary while the details remain in obscurity. In this respect the utter failure of the Old Testament Church in interpreting the prophecies relating to the first Coming of Christ teaches us to be modest and diffident in explaining those which relate to His Second Coming. And with reference to this great and continued interpretation of the Scriptures it is to be remarked, and remembered, that "in the Old Testament the Messianic period is described *as a whole*. The fact that the Messiah was to come and establish an everlasting Kingdom which was to triumph over all opposition, and experience a glorious consummation, was clearly

foretold. All these events were, so to speak, included in the same picture ; but the perspective was not preserved. The prophecies were not intended to give the chronological order of the events foretold. Hence the consummation of the Messiah's kingdom is depicted as in immediate proximity with His appearance in the flesh. This led almost all the Jews, and even the disciples of Christ themselves, *before* the day of Pentecost, to look for the immediate establishment of the Messiah's Kingdom in its glory."

Wisdom leads us to be satisfied with the real truths which those prophecies unfold, and leave the details to be explained by the event. As the prophet says: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but *at the end it shall speak*, and lie not: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3).

This has been the general attitude of the evangelical churches through the years that are past.

A Personal Coming.—As we consider the *nature* of this second advent or coming of the Lord it is a fact which cannot be controverted that the common Church doctrine is, that there is to be a second, personal, bodily and visible advent of glory of the Son of God, and that certain events, as, for example, the preaching of the Gospel for a witness throughout the world, are to precede its occurrence.

Before giving the Scriptural proofs of this 'blessed hope' it is to be admitted that the words "coming of the Lord" are often used in Scripture for any signal manifestation of the presence of Christ either for judgment or for mercy. There is a

coming of Christ, true and real, which is not outward and visible, as, for example, when Jesus promised to manifest Himself to His disciples. "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 22, 23). So also the Lord's words to the church in Pergamos must be so interpreted: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly" (Rev. ii. 16).

But while this is admitted, even rationalists, together with almost the universal consensus of the Christian Church, have agreed that the evangelists and early Christians understood the language of Christ in reference to His second coming, as predictions of a personal and visible advent, connected with a resurrection and judgment. And *we* therefore have no alternative but to believe in a personal second advent. And necessarily so, for what the Apostles believed we are bound to believe; for St John said: "He that knoweth God, heareth us."

Scriptural Statements regarding two Advents.—The Old Testament gives the clearest details of a Messiah coming in humiliation to suffer—that is, of a suffering Messiah—and also of the same coming again in glory. From the analogy between the first and second Advents the rationalistic Jews would have had precisely the same reasons for believing in a more spiritual coming of the Messiah as modern rationalists have for saying that His

second coming is to be spiritual. The advent in both cases is predicted in very nearly the same terms. If, therefore, His first coming was in person and visible, so must His second coming be likewise.

An argument which appears to be quite irrefutable is the fact that the two advents are often spoken of in connection, the one illustrating the other. The Son of God came the first time as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world ; He is to come " the second time, without sin, unto salvation " (Heb. ix. 28). Christ is now invisible to us, having been received up into heaven, until a certain determined time. As the Apostle Peter said, God " shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began " (Acts iii. 20, 21).

It is possible to quote many Scriptures where it is directly asserted that the appearing of our Saviour is to be personal and visible.

At the very time of His ascension this precious truth was asserted. " Ye men of Galilee," said the angels to the disciples, " why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven " (Acts i. 11). His second coming is to be as visible as His ascension. They saw Him go, and they shall see Him come.

The Lord Himself said: " Hereafter shall ye see

the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven " (Matt. xxvi. 64) ; " Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory " (Matt. xxiv. 30) ; " Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud " (Luke xxi. 27).

As we view the above and further Scriptures of like character we see how all the circumstances attending the second coming are stated to be *personal* and *visible*. In the clouds, with great glory, with the holy angels, with the saints, ushered in with a shout and the voice of the archangel (1 Thess. iv. 16).

The effects ascribed to the second coming are also unique, so far as the saints are concerned, for they are to be caught up for the meeting of the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17).

It is certain, without any doubt whatever, that the Apostles understood Christ to predict His second coming in person. Past and present rationalistic commentators teach almost without exception that the Apostles fully believed, and also taught, that the second coming with all its blessed and glorious consequences would occur in their day. The passages are so many and remarkable pointing to the Lord's visible return in great glory, the same being held forth as the great object of expectation and desire of His people, that it is impossible to deny or refuse their witness. The subject throughout is presented as a very personal one. Christians are described as those who " are waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ "

(1 Cor. i. 7) ; as those who are “ looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ” (Titus ii. 13). To them who look for Him, He is to “ appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation ” (Heb. ix. 28). They are further described as those who are expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. iii. 12). It is also most noticeable how marked a characteristic of the Apostolic writings is their giving such prominence to the doctrine of the second coming. “ Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come ” (1 Cor. iv. 5). “ Christ the firstfruits ; afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming ” (1 Cor. xv. 23). “ Ye are our rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ ” (2 Cor. i. 14). “ He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ” (Phil. i. 6). “ That I may rejoice in the day of Christ ” (ii. 16). “ Our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ” (iii. 20). “ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory ” (Col. iii. 4). “ To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come ” (1 Thess. i. 10). “ What is our hope . . . are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? ” 1 Thess. ii. 19). “ Unblameable in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints ” (iii. 13). “ We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord . . . shall be caught up . . . in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord ” (iv. 15-17).

To the Thessalonians in his second Epistle St Paul writes that they shall have rest "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven" (2 Thess. i. 7). He tells them, however, that the coming of Christ was not at hand, but first there must come a great falling away. To Timothy he said: "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 14). "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8). As we peruse the epistles of St Peter we see that they afford the same evidence of the deep hold which the promise of Christ's second coming had taken on the minds of the Apostles and of all the early Christians. He tells his readers that they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time . . . that the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 5-7). Men are to "give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (iv. 5). "Rejoice . . . that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (iv. 13). "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory" (v. 4). In a passage of much moment he says: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet. i. 16). Without doubt

the transfiguration on the mount was a *type* and *pledge* of the glory of the second advent.

The scoffing of unbelievers at this glorious subject is also anticipated, for the Apostle warns the disciples that such would come, scoffers saying: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." He reminds them, in answer to this objection, that the threatened deluge was long delayed, yet came at last; further, that time with God is not the same as with us, that with Him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. He repeats the assurance that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. iii. 3-10).

As we carefully consider the above passages and take under review the whole tenor of the New Testament teaching on this subject, it is evident (1) that the Apostles fully believed and taught that there is to be a second coming of Christ; (2) that His coming is to be in person, visible and glorious; (3) that they constantly urged this great event on the attention of the people, as an incentive to patience, constancy, joy and holy living; and (4) that the Apostles believed and taught that the second coming of Christ would be attended by a resurrection of believers, of those "that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23).

At this point we would draw the reader's careful attention to 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, where the *certainty* of the second coming of our Lord, with all the tremendous results involved in the same, is definitely

stated, and in such a way as to make it impossible to deny it, except by charging the Apostle Paul with untruth. " But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that have fallen asleep, that ye grieve not as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also in like manner them also who have been laid to sleep through Jesus (διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord* (ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου), that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise go before those that have been laid to sleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up suddenly along with them in the clouds for the meeting of the Lord in the air, and so shall we always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." This passage with all the tremendous truth it contains and sets forth is not a mere opinion of St Paul, who, so the modernists assert, changed his mind in his later epistles, but *the word of the Lord*. It takes therefore a necessary and important place in the Christian's creed. And besides this there is abundant evidence both in Paul's later epistles and in the epistles of Peter stating the certainty of the second coming, much of which we have already given.

Three Advent Terms.—We now turn to consider briefly three words which the inspired word gives us, three words which emphasise in a special manner,

three aspects of the Coming of Christ. They are Parousia (παρουσία), Epiphaneia (ἐπιφάνεια), and Apocalupsis (ἀποκάλυψις).

(1) *Parousia* means literally "a being alongside," a personal presence. It is used more than twenty times in the New Testament, and generally is translated in the Authorised Version by the word "Coming." It denotes a *personal presence* whenever it is used, as, for example, in 2 Cor. x. 10, "But [his] bodily presence [parousia] is weak"; Phil. ii. 12, "Not as in my presence" (parousia); 1 Cor. xvi. 17, "I am glad of the coming [parousia] of Stephanas"; 1 Cor. xv. 23. "They that are Christ's at his coming" (parousia), 1 Cor. xv. 23. And so with each mention of the word. The word parousia unmistakably postulates and proclaims the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in bodily form.

(2) The term *epiphaneia* as applied to the coming of the Lord or His parousia is generally translated in the Authorised Version as "an appearing," but literally it means "a *manifestation*." It points to the glory of the Person of the glorified Jesus. It indicates the attendant glory of the parousia or personal coming in general. Epiphaneia is used of the Lord's first manifestation or coming as well as of His second (2 Tim. i. 10; iv. 8). It points to the manifestation of His power and of His glory in this power. It is a word in line with John ii. 11, where Christ at the first miracle of Cana in Galilee manifested forth His glory. Its use in 2 Thess. ii. 8, in connection with the word parousia, shows up the distinction in meaning between the two words very clearly: "And then shall the lawless one be

revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall consume with the manifestation of His presence," textually, "with the epiphaneia of His parousia." The manifestation of the glory of the personal Saviour at His Advent will be the destruction of all anti-Christian powers, and the bringing in of the age of universal peace. For just as the Lord appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, and to John in Patmos, so will the Son of Man appear, when according to His promise He will be seen sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven "in his own glory and the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels" (Matt. xxvi. 64; Luke ix. 26).

(3) Christ's return is likened, thirdly, to "an unveiling," an "apocalupsis." Christ at His first coming "hid as it were his face from us" (Is. liii. 3). His Godhead, "veiled in flesh," the Jews did not recognise through their own veil of unbelief (2 Cor. iii. 15), "even unto this day when Moses is read the veil is upon their heart." They do not recognise that "now once in the end of the world hath Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and that He "is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us," "and *the second time* shall appear to those earnestly expecting him for salvation" (Heb. ix. 24-28).

The effect of this "unveiling" is to be the conversion of Israel, the destruction of the enemies of the Lord, and rest and joy for His redeemed people. "Rest with us," says the Apostle Paul (2 Thess. i. 7, 8); joy says the Apostle Peter "at the un-

veiling of Jesus Christ ; whom having not seen ye love ; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory : receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls ” (1 Pet. i. 8, 9). These three words parousia, epiphaneia and apocalupsis ought surely to be the reply to the longing of the believer’s heart. For it is unthinkable that the world’s last view of the Lord of glory should be to see Him hanging on the Cross as a malefactor and laid lifeless in a man-made tomb ! The awful tragedy of the Cross, too, still unrepented of by the Jews nationally, necessitates and demands this manifestation in vindication of the Lord of glory and to convict the world of sin.

No, “ He was despised and rejected of men,” but He is *coming again*.

First of all He is coming again for “ His own,” as He said : “ I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also ” (John xiv. 3).

And with His saints He will return “ with power and great glory,” attended by thousands of the heavenly host, as the writer to the Hebrews says : “ When he again bringeth in the firstborn into the inhabited earth, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him ” (Heb. i. 6). This day is sure and certain.

The Second Coming and the Resurrection of Believers.—Our subject is most important for still another reason. St Paul declares the resurrection of Jesus to be the vital fact transcending all others. He states that the source of our resurrection both

spiritually and bodily lies in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept . . . Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's *at his coming*" (1 Cor. xv. 17, 20, 23). Scripture clearly states not only that our resurrection depends upon His, but also upon *His coming again*.

His coming again is here seen to be part of the Divine plan and has its essential place in it. It is the climax of a series of events terminating in the full salvation of sinners, a salvation which includes the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23). The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the great consummation. For at His coming, the Apostle Paul tells us, "we shall all be changed." And the glory of the change is most remarkable. For to the question, "What shall we be like?" St John gives the reply, "Beloved, now are we the children of God; and it has not yet been made known what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be *like him* [ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ]; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). And to the questions, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" the answer is the same. The changed body is attributed to the Lord Jesus Himself. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body [the body of our low estate or humiliation] that it may be conformable [σύνμορφον] to his

glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 20-21).

The parousia is thus for the gathering together of the saints unto Him (2 Thess. ii. 1), to be like Him, and to be with Him—a most wondrous glory.

The Time of the Coming.—To the question, *When* will the Coming of the Lord be? the reply has been given by the Lord Himself just before His ascension: "It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts i. 7). But though *times* are hidden, yet they are promised, "Times of restoration of all things" through the coming of Jesus Christ (Acts iii. 21). A day is appointed in which God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained—that is, by the risen and ascended Christ (xvii. 31). But though *times* are hidden, *signs* are given, and among many we make mention of one in some detail, and this the greatest of all. "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). According to St Mark, "the gospel must first be published among all nations" (xiii. 10). Our Lord after His resurrection gave His commission to the Church, saying: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the *end* of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Thus there is an end to this age and dispensation, and during this period of time the Gospel is to be universally preached as a witness. We see how typical of its design and destiny, as the religion of the whole world, was the first proclamation of the Gospel. Endued with power from on high, the Apostles began to declare the wonderful works of God to "Parthians, and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, and in Pontus and Asia, and in Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians"—this beginning being typical of world-wide evangelisation. The Apostles accordingly "went everywhere" and evangelised everywhere. For the mystery was at a later date revealed to St Paul that Jew and Gentile alike are partakers of the redemption of Christ; that the middle wall of partition was broken down, and that the Gentiles were no more "strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19). And a further mystery was also revealed to him, that the *national* conversion of the Jews was not to take place "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25, 26). This *pleroma* or fulness of the Gentiles is that which makes the number of the Gentiles full; the full complement which the Gentiles are to render to make the number of the elect complete. For the promise to Abraham was not a promise affecting Israel alone, but was universal: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the

earth be blessed " (Gen. xxii. 18). It was a promise affecting the world. But in addition to the blessings promised to the Church there are definite predictions of Israel's national conversion, as, for example, in Zech. xii. 10, where is written : " And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications ; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." This national spiritual change is further indicated to be effected at the coming Armageddon, when " the Lord shall go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives " (xiv. 3, 4). In this connection St Paul writes : " And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob " (Rom. xi. 26). On the ground that " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Israel, the natural branches, are to be grafted into their own olive-tree again, though at present broken off (xi. 24). Israel's conversion will then prove a world-wide blessing in glorious evangelisation. " For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ? " (xi. 15). It is therefore evident that the coming of the Lord is not only the " blessed hope " of the saints, but is also to bring national blessedness to Israel, and thereafter through their blessing the

blessing is to be world-wide—for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters that cover the sea.

The Nearness of the Coming.—The question, therefore, of the nearness of His coming thus becomes of the highest importance to the worker in God's vineyard. And signs at the present time are multiplied, which show how very near this tremendous crisis in history is. For example, the Gospel has *almost* been preached to all nations for a witness (Matt. xxiv. 14) ; the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles is nearly at an end (Luke xxi. 24) ; the fig-tree, a type of the Jewish people, referred to by Our Lord in parable, is now shooting forth leaves, and not only the fig-tree but "all the trees"—that is, all the nations are in political activity—(xxi. 29-31) : all of which points to this *nearness*. The tremendous spread of spiritism (1 Tim. iv. 1) ; scoffers (2 Pet. iii. 3) ; mockers (Jude 18) ; "heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them" (2 Pet. ii. 1) ; the "mystery of lawlessness," coming to a head in Bolshevism and Communism and naked atheism ; the tremendous "falling away" in the Churches now so manifest (2 Thess. ii. 3, 7)—all such give the warning proof of our Saviour's words: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find *the* faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). The fulfilment of Daniel's prediction, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (xii. 4) ; the apparent indication of a "league of nations" in Luke xxi. 25, "and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity," literally,

“and upon the earth a holding fast together (*συνσχῆ*) of nations, without a passage out (*ἀπορία*)”—a league of nations the world’s only hope—one and all of these signs points to the certain conclusion, that the coming of the Lord is near. And in the midst of the gathering darkness enveloping the nations, the voice of the Saviour is clearly heard, saying: “When these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

The Suddenness of the Coming.—It is impossible to close this chapter without drawing attention to the fact that Holy Scripture emphasises in the clearest possible manner the advent of our Saviour as a sudden and unexpected happening. His coming again is predicted to be to a world generally filled with an utter indifference to this revealed truth, deaf to the Gospel message of salvation through the crucified and risen and ascended Lord. “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. xxiv. 37-39). “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day

when the Son of man is revealed " (Luke xvii. 28-30).

Such are the weighty and warning words of the Lord Himself. And He gives others of equal moment. " In such an hour *as ye think not*, the Son of man cometh "; " Watch, therefore ; for *ye know not what hour* your Lord doth come " (Matt. xxiv. 44, 42). Again He tells us that His coming will be like the lightning's flash (Matt. xxiv. 27). And still again in startling and arresting language He says : " Behold, I come as a thief " (Rev. iii. 3 ; xvi. 15). " In the twinkling of an eye " (1 Cor. xv. 52) is the suddenness of His arrival. How ominous ought the above words to be to the unprepared, callous and indifferent readers ! What a " blessed hope " is contained in them for those who love and are eagerly waiting for their Lord ! In this most comprehensive and telling way the Scriptures set forth before those who are willing to learn, the glorious fact of the second coming of the Lord. And not least is this truth impressed upon believers when they come to the Table of the Lord. " For as often as ye eat this bread," says the Apostle, " and drink this cup, ye do shew [declare] the Lord's death *till He come* " (1 Cor. xi. 26).

Any delay in the coming must be put to the account of man and not of God. For " the Lord is not slack [slow] concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. . . . And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation " (2 Pet. iii. 9, 15). Man's slackness or slowness in

obeying the Gospel command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15), is therefore the prime factor in the delay of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Although to hasten this end He honours His disciples with the privilege of service for Himself, saying, "*Occupy till I come*" (Luke xix. 13).



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